

# AMERICAN SOCIETY

*Prepared By Ner Le'Elef*

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# CHAPTER ONE: PRINCIPLES AND CORE VALUES

## *i- Introduction*

Although everyone recognizes that America had problems, many see it as the leading example of “the good society.” Typical are the comments of Robert J. Samuelson in the Newsweek Special Issue at the end of the Millennium:

“The U.S. GDP in 1998 of more than \$8 trillion slightly exceeded the output of the European Union (which has 100 million more people) and surpassed Japan’s output by about \$5 trillion. On average, incomes per person are 45 percent higher in America [than the rest of the world] ...

The 20th century has been a contest of ideas. At the outset, there was Empire, the notion (crudely put) that some peoples deserve to rule over others. Then there was Fascism and Communism. Only the American ideal – with its emphasis put on human dignity, freedom and material progress – survived. Indeed, its continuous, if sporadic, spread inspired the American writer Francis Fukuyama to declare “the end of history.” Triumphant democracy and market economies would slowly erase major geopolitical conflicts.”

There is no single coherent set of ethical principles on which American law and ethics, or that of any other Western country, is based. Some laws come from Roman Law, and the Western legal tradition that built on it; some are built on the idea of natural law, which presumes that there are certain universal laws for mankind, whereas other laws are based on principles of enlightened self-interest, which presumes that laws are merely for the collective convenience of the society. The Ten Commandments are quite well accepted as G-d-given principles on the one hand, while many other principles were made as if there were no G-d at all. Nor do the principles combine to form an internally self-consistent system, a fact that leads to many contradictions and even double-standards.<sup>1</sup> Man-made systems are simply not

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<sup>1</sup> The following was culled from an article by John Leo in *U.S. News & World Report*, August 7, 2000, *When Rules Don't Count*:

Herbert Marcuse was a fashionable radical intellectual of the 1960s who believed that tolerance and free speech mostly serve the interests of the powerful. So he called frankly for “intolerance against movements from the right, and toleration of movements from the left.” To restore the balance between oppressors and oppressed, he argued, indoctrination of students and “deeply pervasive” censorship of oppressors would be necessary, starting in college.

Double standards are all around us now:

- Endless restrictions on abortion protesters that would never be applied to other demonstrators.
- The belief that all-black college dorms are progressive but all-white ones are racist.
- Explanations that the killing of whales is a universal social horror, except when conducted by the oppressed (American Indians).

A quarter century of feminist yawning over feminist Mary Daly’s ban on males in her Boston College classes, though a male professor who tried to bar females would have been hammered into submission in one day.

John Leo, *U.S. News and World Report*, November 29, 2004: *Don't discount moral views*: ...The “don’t impose” people make little effort to be consistent, deploring, for example, Roman Catholics who act on their church’s beliefs on abortion and stem cells but not those who follow the pope’s insistence that the rich nations share their wealth with poor nations or his opposition to the death penalty and the invasion of Iraq....Consistency would also require the “don’t impose” supporters to speak up about coercive schemes intended to force believers to violate their own principles: antiabortion doctors and nurses who are required in some jurisdictions to study abortion techniques; Catholic agencies forced to carry contraceptive coverage in health plans; evangelical college groups who believe homosexuality is a sin defunded or disbanded for not allowing gays to become officers in their groups; the pressure from the ACLU and others to force the boy Scouts to admit gays, despite a Supreme Court ruling that the Scouts are entitled to go their own way....Sometimes the “don’t impose’ arguments pops up in an odd form, as when John Kerry tried to define the stem-cells argument as science versus ideology. But the stem-cell debate in fact featured ideology versus ideology –the belief that the chance to eliminate many diseases outweighs the killing of infinitesimal embryos versus the belief that killing embryos for research is a moral violation and a dangerous precedent. Both arguments are serious moral ones. Those who resent religiously based arguments often present themselves as rational and scientific, whereas people of faith are dogmatic and emotional. This won’t do. As Professor Volokh argues, “All of our opinions are ultimately based on

capable of creating a system where all the principles unite to form one coherent whole, where there are clear principles of deciding what happens when two principles appear to conflict and where the principles are readily applicable at all times and in all places. A cursory look at *Supreme Court* decisions shows how different courts impose their respective decisions on the society at large. These in turn generally reflect conservative or liberal swings in the population at large.

All these principles combine to form what has become known as *secular humanism*, secular because it was man made; humanistic because it is supposed to represent the highest levels of moral and interpersonal sensitivity towards mankind. In this section, we will first consider some of the individual principles underlying this secular humanism and then, at the end, look at the more fundamental idea of how far human reason in general can go. But to understand the full picture one must also look at how well American society is operating today; what kind of art and music it has, how happy its marriages are, how well adjusted and fulfilled its people are, and most importantly, what kind of moral contribution they are making to themselves and the rest of the world. All of these comprise the various sections contained in this booklet.

## America as empire

America is considered by most scholars today as not only the strongest country on earth, but as controlling an empire, “a colossus,” as one writer put it. Although the Americans prefer not to rule directly over other countries, America’s direct and indirect influence over most of the world makes it at least comparable to the Roman and other great empires of yesteryear<sup>2</sup>. This situation has gone on now for over 100 years, although at various stages the Soviet Union, the Nazis and Japan looked like they might be able to challenge this. It is true that in the 21C, other economic powers have also emerged, China in particular and, to a lesser degree India and Brazil. But, if in the 2020s this statement will no longer hold true, it still does today.

From the 1990’s onwards, America became exponentially more powerful – economically, militarily and technologically – than any other country in the world, if not in history.<sup>3</sup> By this time, the Soviet empire had collapsed, the Japanese economy was beginning to weaken and the technology-internet revolution led by the States put it in a situation of unprecedented dominance. The American military could easily fight and win more than one war at the same

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unproven and unprovable moral premises.” No arguments are privileged because they come from secular people, and none are somehow out of bounds because they come from people of faith. Religious arguments have no special authority in the public arena, but the attempt to label those arguments as illegitimate because of their origin is simply a fashionable form of prejudice.

<sup>2</sup> See Martin Walker in the *Winston Quarterly*, summer 2002, for a detailed comparison of the States with Rome of old as well as in his book, *The Cold War: A History* (1993). Walker points out that this is an empire without an emperor. For a radical critique of the USA as empire, read *Empire* (2001, Harvard Press), by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas L. Friedman in the *NY Times*, May, '03: As people realized this, they began to organize against it. In the 1999 Seattle protest people said "I want to have a vote on how your power is exercised, because it's a force now shaping my life." Michael Mandelbaum, author of The Ideas That Conquered the World [says that other countries are making] an effort to Gulliverize America. [They are making] an attempt to tie it down, using the rules of the World Trade Organization or U.N. In the age of globalization, rivals cannot hit the U.S. without wrecking their own economies. The only people who use violence are rogues or nonstate actors with no stakes in the system.

time<sup>4</sup>, the global economy was fueled by U.S.A. exports and imports, and politically, the U.S.A. could go it alone if it so desired and as it almost did in the second Iraq war. Almost all Americans agree to the idea of the U.S. *leading the world to peace*. In a sense the States is greater than Rome ever was. In a post-Soviet world, U.S.A. power is unchallenged. Yet the Romans always had the mighty Persians on their flank. The Americans have also developed *a better system of imperialism* – it is not an empire sustained by brute force (though the military will flex its muscles whenever it has to<sup>5</sup> and the U.S.A. will go it alone if need be<sup>6</sup>). In fact, the Americans believe that all should benefit from capitalism, democracy and freedom. Theirs is a populist empire. *America rules by virtue of its economic, academic and cultural superiority. It rules by “seduction rather than coercion.”*<sup>7</sup> Many American leaders see in this more than raw power. They see, as Reinold Niebuhr put it, a mission of “tutoring mankind on its pilgrimage to perfection.”<sup>8</sup>

Consider:

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<sup>4</sup> The issue of Iraq and Afghanistan – two wars which, in 2009 President Obama felt had to be reduced to one (Afghanistan), in order to win, was more a matter of political will than limited resources. America, if it had to, would have been capable of doubling and tripling its forces in both countries simultaneously.

<sup>5</sup> As it did against the Germans and the Japanese in World War II, against the Communists in Vietnam and Korea and against countless others. The war against terrorism after September 11 is the latest of these projects.

<sup>6</sup> Unilateralism, as this is called, has recently been expressed by the USA abrogating the ABM treaty with Russia, reducing its funding of the UN, declaring war on the Taliban of Afghanistan, and taking positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict totally out of step with its so-called European allies. The USA has refused to sign several treaties, including one establishing a world court and another on the environment. In other cases, such as NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the UN Security Council, the USA does cooperate with others but has the overwhelming say.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Bacevich, Winston Quaterly, *ibid*.

NYT April 9, 2000 *More and More, Europeans Find Fault With U.S.*, Suzanne Daley: Mr. Mamère, an outspoken though hardly extreme member of the French Parliament, has devoted an entire book to his argument that America is a worrisome society these days.... the United States throws its weight around and would have the entire world follow in its steps. ...At this moment, he says in his closing chapter, "it is appropriate to be downright anti-American." ...In France, indeed in Europe, Mr. Mamère is by no means alone in his criticism of the United States. Poking fun at America has always been a European pastime, particularly among the French. In the past, Americans have been ridiculed as Bermuda-shorts-wearing louts who call strangers by their first names and know nothing about the good life. But today's criticism is far from being an amusing rejection of food rituals. Experts say that it has a virulence and an element of fear never seen before. ..."With the fall of the Berlin Wall, America was left as the only superpower," said Stéphane Rozés, the director general of CSA Opinion, which conducts many surveys for news organizations. "And there is a great deal of fear out there that the strength of America's economy will impose not only economic changes but social changes as well. What they see is an America that has the ability to impose its values and they are not values that the Europeans believe in."

To be sure, the average European is embracing much that comes from the United States. Its films, its music, its fashion and, even if no-one in France particularly cares to admit it, its fast food. The weekly best-seller list shows more than half the top selling novels in France are translations of American books. There are frequent complaints of a brain drain as young people flock to Silicon Valley and elsewhere in America to get their start in life. ...But at the same time the view of a belligerent United States is growing too. Polls conducted by CSA in the last few years suggest that Europeans have some extremely negative views of the United States. In April last year, 68 percent of the French said they were worried about America's status as a superpower. Only 30 percent said there was anything to admire across the Atlantic. Sixty-three percent said they did not feel close to the American people....The Italians seemed to appreciate America the most. But they still showed profound concern about the American model... "Never has America been so loved and so hated," says the novelist Pascal Bruckner, who has also written on anti-Americanism. "But in some ways America should be glad. We are not condemning the Russians for a lack of morality. We don't care. They don't count."...Mr. Mamère's book, written with Olivier Warin, has not been published in America, nor does he expect it to be. "It would be great if they read some of what we write, but they do not," he said. "It would be great if they saw what they looked like from over here. But they are not interested. The Americans are so sure of themselves. They think they are the best in the world, that they are way ahead of everyone and everyone needs to learn from them."

<sup>8</sup> President Theodore Roosevelt stated in his 1905 State of the Union Address: Our aim should be from time to time to take such steps as may be possible toward creating something like an organization of the civilized nations.

- Since World War II, the U.S.A. has been spending more on its military than any other nation in history. (\$329 billion for 2002 alone and expected to be \$379 billion in 2003.) All the navies in the world combined could not defeat the U.S. navy today. The U.S.A. spends more on its military than the next nine largest spenders combined<sup>9</sup>. Yet, the U.S. economy is so large that this spending is less than 4% of the budget.
- The U.S.A. dominates the world intellectual scene. At least 17 of the 20 greatest academic institutes today are in the States. (The other three possibly being Oxford, Cambridge and London, all in England.) Over 80% of Nobel Prize recipients are either U.S. citizens or have relocated to the States.
- The U.S.A. dominates the world economically.<sup>10</sup> It takes the combined economies of the European Economic Union to match this economy. McDonalds alone has 16,000 franchises out of the States, more than in the U.S.A.<sup>11</sup>
- The U.S.A. dominates the world culturally, i.e., with “soft power”<sup>12</sup>. U.S.A. pop culture, and even language usage, as well as fast foods and consumerism even creep in to countries which are hostile to the U.S.A. Although we speak of globalization and of an international economy, it is essentially American culture and, to a lesser degree, values which are transmitted by this economy. Britain, Germany and France also have multinational companies, but “they operate in an economic system of which the U.S.A. is the financial linchpin and military guarantor.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> American military superiority has only been increased by a weakening Europe, causing the States to essentially go it alone in several recent conflicts.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Barone, *A Place Like No Other*. U.S. News and World Report, June 28 / July 5, 2004: ...Today, the United States is the third-most populous nation in the world, our economy produces nearly a third of the world's good and services, and our military is more powerful than the rest of the world's militaries combined. We are, as political scientist Seymour Martin Lipset writes, "the most religious, optimistic, patriotic, rights-oriented, and individualistic" country in the world. At the same time, however, we are also the most materialistic, self-absorbed, and swaggering nation on Earth. When we speak of American values we are speaking of something unique,... are almost constantly in real or apparent conflict with one another. How, for example, can the world's most egalitarian nation allow such a yawning gap between rich and poor, a gap that grows wider with each passing year? How does a nation of immigrants, with its impulse for inclusiveness, square with its history of division and racial strife?...

<sup>11</sup> It was only right at the end of the 20C that McDonald's abroad had more franchises than in the USA. In 2002, it had approximately 12,000 franchises inside the USA, a figure that had not changed much six years later.

<sup>12</sup> Joseph Nye's term (Nye is Dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard).

<sup>13</sup> Walker, *Winston Quarterly*, summer 2002, pg. 48.

This may change in one respect, i.e. if the dollar no longer remains the international currency of choice. China and Brazil are pushing for change on this front, but, as of writing (Dec. 2009), this was but a distant threat.

## ii- *Underlying ethical principles*<sup>14</sup>

One of the most important sources for ethics in any Western Society is a system of values and laws that goes by the fancy name of *Utilitarianism*.<sup>15</sup> Proposed by the Englishmen, Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832C) and John Stuart Mill (19C),<sup>16</sup> Utilitarianism is usually defined as *the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Good here really means happiness*<sup>17</sup> and is therefore a doctrine of advanced hedonism.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, Mill acknowledged his indebtedness to Epicures, the original proponent of hedonism. Democracies are the best expression of this doctrine, where the legislature is meant to represent the majority wishes.<sup>19</sup>

In fact, Bentham lived just after Napoleon when Russian, German and Spanish jurists were involved in reframing their constitutions. He greatly influenced these as well as South America and the U.S.A., where he had the ear of Presidents Adams and Madison.<sup>20</sup>

Utilitarianism is really a doctrine of *how most people in the world can be selfish and still get on with each other*.<sup>21</sup> The nice way of saying this is that it is a doctrine of *enlightened self-interest*.<sup>22</sup> The basic idea at the time was that people are essentially selfish. Thomas Hobbes in

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<sup>14</sup> From a Jewish perspective, the facts are that we live in a culture which is ultimately in great tension to our values - yet that very society - America - has been so good to us, and we have used it to achieve so much Torah. That is the real tension of our "American" golus. However, it would be valuable to not only note the tensions as one goes along but to try and understand the "shita" of the tensions - what are the underlying patterns of thinking or values which are consistently being invoked without necessarily being made explicit. That will better allow one to recognize these and deal with them throughout life. ... 1. The American society has many disagreements amongst itself - Democrats-Republicans, welfare-capitalist, abortion, euthenasia, interventionist Supreme Court, etc. Orthodox Jews often presume that one side is right and one side wrong and then take sides. But the Jewish approach is often not like either one. 2. Part of the problem arises because these Jews allow the secular world to define the question, determining within which parameters the answer will lie (secular humanistic paradigm). The issue then becomes: What are the right Torah questions to ask about this or that issue to begin with? Is the broader world asking the right questions - either side?

<sup>15</sup> Utilitarianism is defined as the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

<sup>16</sup> Mill (1806-1873) was the son of James Mill who was Bentham's student. Mill's real contribution to Bentham's work was to define happiness.

<sup>17</sup> The rule then becomes: Act so as to produce the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people (or, in the words of modern philosopher Richard Hare, to produce the greatest satisfaction of people's preferences).

<sup>18</sup> Therefore, Utilitarianism does not believe that any act is intrinsically valuable or good. It is only good as far as it produces desirable consequences (=consequentialist ethics). Since this is decided by each person and by people in general, Utilitarianism is really a theory of relative ethics.

There is another problem with Utilitarianism in that it defines the good as that which brings the greatest amount of happiness. Although Mill tried to distinguish between lower, purely physical happinesses and higher, more moral or spiritual happinesses, no proper definition of these higher happinesses has ever been consistently applied in practice.

<sup>19</sup> In practice, what most people want most of all, is to be free to make their own decisions to lead their own lives. Most people would rather have as much personal autonomy as possible, even if they are likely to make worse choices than someone else (an expert) would make for them. Therefore, Utilitarianism leads inevitably toward the concept of freedom discussed below.

<sup>20</sup> Nicholas Fearn in *Zeno and the Tortoise* pg. 111.

<sup>21</sup> Bentham proposed a simple arithmetic calculation for calculating this. Nicholas Fearn puts it like this: Both the legislation of government and the actions of individuals were to be subjected to the 'hedonic calculus.' The happiness or unhappiness they produced for an individual was quantified and then multiplied by the number of people who enjoyed or suffered these consequences. If the aggregate effects were good rather than bad, and a better result could not be obtained through different means, then the law or action was right and just. The hedonic calculus was a method for solving all moral dilemmas through simple addition and subtraction. (*Zeno and the Torotoise*, pg. 111)

<sup>22</sup> The ethics of modern, Western societies is often called enlightened self-interest. "Self-interest" because he ought to keep the law and morality as much for his own good as for the good of his fellow man. "Enlightened" because this is really quite a sophisticated and educated form of selfishness. But enlightened self-interest can never turn a sinner into a saint.

his *Leviathan* (1651), made it clear that all that human beings ever do amounts to self-interest. *Even acts of altruism, when analyzed correctly amount to selfishness. I only lay down my life for my friend because I fear the more painful outcome of having to live with the guilt if I do not.* Left to their own devices, Hobbes stated, the life of people would be ‘nasty, brutish and short.’

Hobbes had an enormous influence on the moral authority of all states. The question that people were asking at the time was, *“If all I am supposed to do is to look out for my own interests, what forces me to obey any law? If I decide that a particular law is not in my good, what moral imperative demands that I keep the law anyhow?”* To answer this, Hobbes, John Locke and the Frenchman Jean Jacques Rousseau invented the idea of *the Social Contract Theory*.<sup>23</sup> By living in a particular country it is as if I have signed a contract, committing myself to obey the laws of that country. I can of course leave for another country or, if I so desire, for the middle of the jungle. But so long as I stay, I have made this implicit commitment.

The closest thing we see in Judaism to this are the concepts of **דרכי שלום** or because of **איבה**, two of the lowest forms of moral motivation which חז”ל use in their תקנות. *The Social Contract is there because without it we would all be killing each other. It is there not because we are striving to do good*, to make the world a better place, but because, in desiring to be selfish, we realize that this is the kind of social and political relationship we have to have.

*The twin of Utilitarianism is Capitalism. Adam Smith made clear in his The Wealth of Nations (1776) that enlightened self-interest ought to be elevated to a level of unquestioned truth* (see **Capitalism** below).

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Very often self-interest may point to the opposite direction. It is not always the case that honesty is the best policy; that good ethics proves sound economics and safe politics. Hitler’s Germany up to Stalingrad thought otherwise. It really believed that aggression, brutality, lying and deceit paid; and these would indeed have brought them in rich dividends but for the ‘Miracle of Dinkirk,’ and what Sir (then Mr.) Winston Churchill called, the ‘Interfering Hand.’

Is it then a wonder that the cultured and educated Greeks, although the most splendidly gifted race that has ever lived, ended by committing suicide, killing off each other in silly and unnecessary wars, and in savage faction fights.

And not only is ethics unable to turn a sinner into a saint. It has no power of producing a saint even from a good man. Ethics can, indeed, claim a number of goodly men of virtue; but no saints. A saint does not only act good. He is possessed of an unaffected enthusiasm for goodness. He is horrified by even vicious thoughts.

This inability of ethics to produce saintly men has already been noted by Maimonides. After codifying in his *Hilekot Melakim*, the seven commandments of the sons of Noah that constitute for all times the religion of humanity, Maimonides concludes with the following words: “Whosoever accepts the seven commandments and is careful in the observance of them, belongs to the saints of the nations of the world, and has a share in the world to come. That is, provided he accepts and fulfils them because God has commanded them in the Torah ... But if he observes them as a result of his own contemplation, he does not belong to the saints of the nations of the world, but to their sages.”

Here we have Maimonides’ declaration that ethics divorced from religion may well be productive of sages, wise men, *Hakamim*, but not of *Hasidim*, saints and pious men (adapted from *The Faith of Judaism*, Isadore Epstein).

<sup>23</sup> This theory either states that all men in any particular society have made a contract between themselves or that they have made a contract between themselves and the king. These 18<sup>th</sup> Century philosophers were preceded by the רשב”ם and others in their explanation of דינא דמלכותא דינא by four and more centuries.

### iii- *Do not do what is hateful – The Harm Principle*

A slightly more noble principle is Kant's famous dictum which was to act in such a way that whatever you do will become a universal principle. This basically amounts to saying: What if everyone did that? I may not steal because I do not want to allow other people to steal from me, etc. This is a fairly good principle when it comes to telling you what not to do. It does not tell you what you ought to do, though. Some commentators say that this is why Hillel's dictum, "What is hateful to you do not do to your fellow man," was expressed in the negative. Hillel was talking to a non-Jew, and this is as far as he felt a non-Jew could understand. In the hands of the non-Jewish world, the positive principle, "Love you neighbor like yourself", would be misapplied. Therefore, all but one of the Noachide laws are expressed negatively. A related principle is the Harm Principle. The Harm Principle basically says that anyone is entitled to do whatever they want to, provided that it does not harm anyone else.<sup>24</sup>

The Harm Principle is a variation of Kant and Utilitarianism and, because it is simpler to understand, is invoked more widely by legislatures. Although in practice there are many laws which contradict the harm principle, e.g., numerous states in the U.S.A. prohibit sodomy even when it is between consenting adults and in private, in practice, the Harm Principle is used to

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<sup>24</sup> Joel Marks wrote the following article in *Philosophy Now*, October/November 2000, *Moral & Other Moments*:

... The Golden Rule ... *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you* ...

*Do unto others as they have done (or are doing) unto you.* I call this the Leaden Rule; but perhaps 'Iron-ic' would be an even meeter metal, for far from being a principle of morality, this rule is a license to model one's behavior on the worst tendencies of others. It sanctions revenge, retaliation, retribution – in short, tit for tat. It implies that two wrongs make a right (besides two rights doing so). Yet like a classic logical fallacy, it has the very feel of its opposite, since to most of us at certain times, requital will transmute this rule to gold. (See Richard Dawkins' *The Selfish Gene*, however, for a fascinating discussion of the biological economy of 'Grudgers'.)

*Do unto others as they would do unto you.* This variation on the above has even less in its favor, because the harmful behavior it endorses would not even be justified by any harm done.

*Do unto others as they would like to do unto you.* There are few base acts that would be barred by such a doctrine as this! It is precisely at the level of thought and desire that immoral inclinations most spontaneously manifest; if these manifestations were to constitute authorization of behavioral expression in another, morality would be devilish in deed (indeed!).

An interesting set of commandments results from an other-turning of all of the above; for example, *Do unto others as they have done unto OTHERS.* So now, instead of just 'getting back at someone' for what they have done to you, you might be, say, avenging what they did to your sister. But, again, however psychologically understandable that may be, it does not seem to be what morality is about. It helps explain, but does not justify certain behaviors; it may mitigate, but does not exonerate. Anyway, if morality only encapsulated what we naturally feel, wouldn't it be otiose? Curiously, though, God (cf. *Matthew 7:2*) and *Karma* (as in, "What goes around, comes around") are supposed to act in accordance with this rule!

*Do unto others as they would (see fit to) do in your place,* or in other words, *if they were in your shoes* (forgoing the metal metaphor, this forgery may therefore be dubbed the Leathern Rule, as opposed to the Leaden Rule). This one I have great sympathy for whenever a student protests that a grade I have given him or her is 'unfair', when from my point of view it is obviously very fair; so I wish the student were able to adopt what I consider to be my broader perspective. But I also know what it is like to be shod upon (so-to-speak), as when an administrator does not grant one of my own petitions, for reasons which the administrator no doubt considers to be more comprehensive than mine. The problem with the Leathern Rule is that it invites self-delusion based on a failure to empathize: We don't really know how others feel, or, feeling what they currently do, how they would feel if they were in our shoes – we just know how we feel. It also lends itself to the complacency of 'bourgeois morality', as when one thinks, "Those folks in Ethiopia wouldn't lift a finger to feed me if our positions were reversed, so why should I make any sacrifices to help them?"

*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you IN ORDER THAT they (or somebody else) will thus do unto you.* This introduces a whole new class of rules, which postulate some 'ulterior motive' or further justification for abiding by the Golden Rule. But the Golden Rule is itself conceived as the ultimate justification, or at least as a fundamental axiom, for our moral behavior. If you obey the Golden Rule only to attain some further end, you are really following some other 'rule'; for example, if your real concern is that others treat *you* well, then in effect you could be following the rule of so-called ethical egoism, which states, "Do whatever is likely to work out the best for you in the long run." The Golden Rule would then reduce to a rule of thumb – something you would do so long as it conforms to the imperative of some other commandment, and not otherwise. But the Golden Rule is not supposed to be conditional in this way.

decide whether to prosecute someone or not. Thus no one is ever prosecuted and convicted on a crime of sodomy.

On its own, the Harm Principle cannot decide what is ethical. It cannot condemn the woman who left a company and stole copies of the company's client data in order to draw from it to start her own business, stating that she had done nothing wrong since she was not planning on competing with her former employer.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Vincent Barry in *The Dog Ate My Homework: Personal Responsibility-How We Avoid It And What To Do About It*.

*iv- Basic human rights; democracy*

Western countries adhere to the principle that every human being has the right to certain basic human rights, no matter who he or she is.<sup>26</sup> Thus even a convicted killer has the right to certain things, as does an imbecile with an IQ of 20. These rights have expressed themselves in England as a part of what is known there as Common Law (a set of legal principles providing many legal principles) or in America in the form of a constitution, or recently in Israel in the form of basic laws (as interpreted by the Supreme Court Judge, Aharon Barak).

It is this concept, rather than simply the democratic election of officials (which also exists in Iran, Sierra Leone – in fact in 117 of the world's 191 countries), which affects how the state treats people. Due process of the law, ruling by constitutional processes (as opposed to presidential decree), separation of powers, protection of basic liberties of speech, assembly, religion and property, all emerge from this broader concept known as “liberal democracy”.

However, a close look at the situation reveals that belief in *צלם אלוקים* is the only legitimate source of universal rights: It is the Jewish belief in *צלם אלוקים* which is the source of the idea that there are universal rights for all human beings. All other attempts at justifying universal human rights have failed.

If we are to say that all men are absolutely equal with respect to basic rights, then we must say that they are equal in some basic respect that is of extreme moral importance. Some try to explain that man is uniquely rational; but clearly some men are more rational than others, and some are only minimally rational. Some try to correct this by saying that all men are potentially rational. But what about a congenital idiot with an IQ of 20 who is clearly not even potentially rational?

Others point to man's unique sensitivity to pain and suffering. But clearly some people are more sensitive to pain than others. Does this make them more worthy of human rights? If we could murder someone suddenly and painlessly who has no one left to mourn for him, would that then be permitted?

Some philosophers have talked about the fact that men are ends in and of themselves, that they are sacred or of infinite value. But this is criticized as only renaming that which has to be explained. The question by what reason are men ends in and of themselves, or are sacred or of infinite value is the same as saying by what value do they merit basic rights. The same can be said of the argument that we have universal worth by our common human ancestry. Again we must ask what it is about our common human ancestry that makes it so worthy of respect.

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<sup>26</sup> December 16, 1999 marked the 51st anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Most countries, including those in the Arab world, have signed this important document. But few honor it in law or in practice.

Article 1 states: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

Article 2: “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.”

Article 13: “Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.”

Article 18: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

Article 19: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

Article 20: “Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.”

Because of all of these problems, some philosophers have simply thrown their hands up in despair and stated that in fact universal respect for human beings is groundless, but that it is worthwhile nevertheless (based on Social Philosophy by Joel Feinberg, *Foundations of Philosophy* series, Prentice Hall, pgs. 88-94).

אבות ג: יד

הוא היה אומר: חביב אדם שנברא בצלם...

ובמהר"ל שם: ואם אחר שבחר השי"ת בישראל נתמעט הצלם הזה אצל האומות מ"מ הצלם האלקי הוא שייך לאדם במה שהוא אדם...

(וכן למד התוספות יום טוב והתפארת ישראל כפשוטו שאפילו להגויים יש צלם.)

רמב"ן שמות כ: יב

לא תרצח – אמר הנה צויתוך להודות שאני בורא את הכל ... א"כ השמר פן תחבל מעשה ידי

Including the Declaration of Independence of U.S.A.:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with inherent and inalienable rights."

state that only ישראל are called אדם. However, non-Jews are included in the name האדם. Just like the first man was created by G-d, so too, in receiving the תורה, כלל ישראל became the אדם who was the intended purpose of the creation; hence they share the name אדם. The nations who, however, had to work on creating their own moral and spiritual identity, are more self-made and are therefore not called אדם. They are included, however, in the general name for mankind, האדם.

(מהר"ל על אבות פ"ג מש' יד)

## ***Democracy***

Today, all Western societies and many others are democracies. Many individual States in the USA, however, go further, with a system called direct democracy (as opposed to representative democracy). 24 states allow referendums, recalls and voter initiatives. California goes further – it is the only state that does not allow its legislature to override successful initiatives (called “propositions”) and has no sunset clauses that let them expire. It also uses initiatives far more than any other state (and some would say far more irresponsibly). Direct democracy in America originated largely in the Western states, during the Populist and then Progressive eras of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It came to California in 1911, when Governor Hiram Johnson introduced it. Today, there is an entire industry of signature-gatherers and marketing strategists that puts an average of ten initiatives a year on the ballot. In 2003 direct democracy reached a new zenith, when Californians “recalled” their elected and sitting governor, Gray Davis, and replaced him with Mr. Schwarzenegger. Californians have decided directly to limit legislators’ terms in office, to mandate prison terms for criminals, to withdraw benefits from undocumented immigrants, and whether to spend money on trains or sewers or to let Indian tribes run casinos. Today, it is not ordinary citizens but rich tycoons or special interests such as unions for prison guards, teachers or nurses that bankroll most initiatives onto the ballots. Propositions tend also to be baldly worded, with double negatives that leave some voters think they voted for something when they really voted against<sup>27</sup>.

### ***v- Equality***

The cry of the French Revolution was for liberty, equality and fraternity. The American Declaration of Independence held: *We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal.*<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *The Economist*, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

<sup>28</sup> Tibor R. Machan, *The Philosophers' Magazine* 2003: In the USA the right tends to endorse the war on drugs, bans on prostitution, gambling, pornography, and other vices. The right means to craft people's souls via government's coercive powers. The left wants government regulation of the economy—minimum wage laws, anti-trust crusades, progressive taxation and government efforts to equalize and redistribute wealth. The left and right both want intrusive government. Ayn Rand noted that metaphysics has an impact here: The right's idealism and the left's materialism tend to dictate what is to be controlled. Libertarians take the legal authority within a given jurisdiction as no more than a well empowered but strictly limited referee. It's only concerned with maintaining peace and the maximum absence of violence against individual rights. "All men are created equal" does not mean that we are all created equally wise, smart, wealthy, lucky or beautiful. It means that we are all equally in charge of our lives. Some chide libertarians, saying "much damage is done when we define human beings not as social beings—not in terms of morally serious roles (citizen, marriage partner, parent, etc.)—but only with reference to the watery idea of a single, morally empty capacity of 'choice'. Politics becomes empty; citizenship, too." (George Will, "What Courts Are Teaching," *Newsweek*, 7 December 1998) Yes, human beings are properly held responsible for assuming various social roles in life—in their marriages, families, politics, etc.—but this responsibility is empty if not freely chosen by them but imposed by others. Simply being free of the intrusions of others is not enough to live right—it is just a precondition. You have to do useful, productive, creative, and imaginative, as well as many other proper things, once free. "I am properly free when all the men and women about me are equally free. Far from being a limitation or a denial of my liberty, the liberty of another is its necessary condition and confirmation." (*Michael Bakunin, The Knouto-Germanic Empire and the Social Revolution*) "Every law is an evil, for every law is an infraction of liberty." (*Jeremy Bentham, Principles of Morals and Legislation*) "In all ages of the world, priests have been enemies of liberty." (*David Hume, Essays*) "It is true that liberty is precious—so precious that it must be rationed." (*Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. Attributed to Lenin in the Webb's Soviet Communism*) "Liberty not only means that the individual has both the opportunity and the burden of choice; it also means that he must bear the consequences of his actions...Liberty and responsibility are inseparable." (*Friedrich Hayek, The Constitution of Liberty*)

On August 28, 1963, the nation's top civil rights crusader, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., addressed a gathering of some 200,000 people at the Mall in Washington, D.C. King delivered the speech that will be remembered as one of the pivotal events in the struggle for equal rights in the United States. "*I have a dream,*" he told Freedom March participants, that all people will be "*free at last, free at last, thank G-d Almighty, free at last.*"

The 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution prohibits discrimination in voting based on sex. One hundred and forty-four years after the birth of the republic, American women received the right to vote.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 granted equal access to public accommodations to everyone regardless of race, religion or national origin. Enactment resulted from numerous civil rights demonstrations, including lunch counter sit-ins and other activities designed to show the hardships and pervasiveness of segregation.

In a related move, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the "separate but equal" concept prevalent in bi-racial communities. In the case, Oliver Brown sued the Board of Education of Topeka, Kan., to allow his daughter to attend the white school near their home. Chief Justice Earl Warren's unanimous decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education* found that *de jure* segregation violated the 14th Amendment. The decision led to more than a decade of struggle in school districts segregated under local laws, some since the Reconstruction.

Recently, this idea of basic human rights was extended in America to the idea of equality, extending rights way beyond the original parameters of basic human rights.

This is especially true when considering minorities such as women and blacks, groups who were considered to be historically under-privileged, but also the disabled, homosexuals and other minorities. The expression of any remark that seems to criticize a whole group or that seems to label a person because of gender, skin color or sexual preference, is considered particularly obnoxious, and a set of politically correct behavior has now emerged.

Thus, for example, despite the complete lack of sexual restraints in American society, the workplace has quite stringent norms (and sometimes regulations) against men making any inappropriate advances to women, in the name of ensuring that female access to the market place is not compromised.

Much of this is good, but sometimes things seem to go too far, John Leo reports.<sup>29</sup> "Sensitivity" censorship is a huge industry. Reviewers debated whether to cut a reference to Mount Rushmore. Many Lakota Indians are offended by the monument since it stands on ground they consider sacred. "Adopt-a-highway" litter control programs are controversial, too. They may offend adopted children."

"References to G-d and religion disappear on exams and in texts." Bandanna Books put out an edition of Walt Whitman's poetry with "he" and "him" changed to the sensitive new unisex terms "hu" and "hum."

"The sensitivity industry tends to reverse stereotypes rather than erase them. The wife is always jumping under the Buick to check the suspension while the husband minds the baby. Stereotype reversal makes it almost impossible to portray elderly people in texts and illustrations, says Diane Ravitch, an assistant secretary of education under the first President Bush. Since it is ageist to depict anyone as limited in any way by the aging process, the elderly tend to come out seeming like vigorous 20 year olds."

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<sup>29</sup> Adapted from *Heck hath no fury ...*, by John Leo, *U.S. News & World Report*, June 17, 2002

**vi- Absolute equality is discriminatory**

A distinction must be made between equality of opportunity and absolute equality. It is cruel not to accommodate differences.

Jews and non-Jews accommodate different expressions of spirituality (see Rabbi Gottlieb, The Informed Soul, pgs. 112-126).

No two people are absolutely equal in intelligence, aptitude, character traits, physical and emotional makeup. A society which forces a cripple to join the infantry, forces a genius and a severely retarded person to get exactly the same education, equal taxation for the rich and the poor, is actually discriminating.

A society which does not take into account differences between people is a cruel society; a cripple should not get drafted to the infantry; a genius (who studies hard) deserves a place in college ahead of someone who has an IQ of 70 (who studies equally as hard); a heart patient deserves more health care aid than a healthy person. We should not treat a baby as an adult nor an elderly man as a youth.

**True equality is providing different opportunities for different types of people so that everyone can fulfill his potential:**

“All of us do not have equal talent, but all of us should have equal opportunity to develop our talents.” John F Kennedy, speech, 1963.

“It was a wise man who said that there is no greater inequality than the equal treatment of unequals.” Felix Frankfurter, judicial opinion, 1949.

**Otherwise equalization leads to a drop in standards in an attempt to level:**

“Your levelers wish to level down as far as themselves; but they cannot bear leveling up to themselves.” (Samuel Johnson quoted in James Boswell’s “*The Life of Samuel Johnson*”).

**Within Judaism, there are many such differences:**

כהן, לוי, ישראל-ל; ת"ח, נביא, מלך וגו'...

**So, too, Judaism understands that women are radically different from men:**

שבת סב.

נשים עם בפני עצמן הן

**Therefore, denying those difference is considered an act of cruelty:**

סוטה יא :

את כל עבודתם אשר עבדו בהם בפרך ... שהיו מחליפין מלאכת אנשים לנשים ומלאכת נשים לאנשים  
עיון יעקב שם : ... שכל אחד יפה לו הקב"ה אמנותו בפניו...

In the U.S.A. there is a deep belief that everyone is born equal, therefore everyone has equal opportunity to advance in life. Many have assumed that the most important thing that one could say about the morality of an arrangement is that it is equal.

A confusion of diversity with inequality. Diversity is a biological fact while equality is a political, ethical and social concept – Dr. Alice Rossi (Daedalus, '77 – A Biosocial Perspective on Parenting).

“It is true that skin color is an unimportant difference and should not affect a person’s rights. But it is not unimportant for the reason that it is biological. The difference between men and apes is merely biological too, as is the difference between men and fishes; yet these

differences rightly lead to different treatment.” – Elizabeth H. Wolgast, Equality and the Rights of Women (Cornell U. Press, pg. 22).

“Some rights depend on individual differences ... the right of a blind person to the use of a white cane, the right of a veteran to burial at public expense, the right of an indigent to government assistance, the right of a fatherless child to public support ... With regard to an equal right, taking a person’s individual qualities into account may constitute discrimination. But with special rights they must be taken into account.” (Wolgast, 41/42) Although it may be argued that, say, the rights of a blind person apply to everyone should they become blind, it is patently absurd to say “that a man possesses the same rights as a woman, for instance a right to maternity leave or midwifery assistance, which he can exercise in the event he ever become female and pregnant.” (Wolgast, 49)

It is therefore to the credit of Judaism that it has taken note of the differences between men and women, different tribes, Cohen, Levi and Yisrael, Jew and non-Jew, and structured society to accommodate these differences.

Adin Steinsaltz – Teshuvah (A Guide for the Newly Observant Jew), Free Press, Chapter 21, The Woman’s Role, pg. 144:

All of G-d’s creatures have their distinct qualities and there is no point in “casting envious glances at [the rest of] Creation.” What is essential is to realize one’s own potential as fully as possible rather than to imitate others. “Thou shalt not covet” is a matter of inner attitude, a desire to have someone else’s qualities and attainments. At whatever level one finds oneself, an awareness of others can and should serve as a goad to achievement and improvement; but it must not be allowed to spawn mere imitation.

This principle is reflected in different ways in a number of מצוות in the תורה, for example in the prohibitions against mingling species and hybridization. To impose upon someone a path that is not suited to him is not to improve but to degrade him. True oneness, Judaism teaches, is not achieved by homogenization but only when each component joins the whole with its unique character intact. Relatedness, affection, and love lose all meaning when distinct identities are obliterated. In the case of individuals, as well as groups, it is the very existence of benignly perceived differences that makes mutual relationships work.

So, too, amongst the nations, “The Jew is naturally suited to developing the moral-spiritual dimension of life.” (D. Gottlieb) His historical performance in this area confirms this.

Certainly the idea of universal human rights means that there are certain issues of equality common to all. There are certain basic ways in which we treat everyone, including congenital idiots and murderers.

“If I see a stranger in danger of drowning, I am not likely to ask myself questions about his moral character before going to his aid ... my obligation here is to a man, to any man in such circumstance.” (Gregory Vlastos, Justice and Equality, pg. 47)

## *vii- Rights and duties*

Every right that a person has creates a duty in someone else. If I have a right to my property, you have a duty not to trespass it, etc. Thus there can be no rights without duties. However, there is a fundamental difference between the starting points of Western vs. Jewish societies. Western societies begin with rights, and duties are but a consequence of this.

Negative rights are often called “liberty” rights (you may not interfere with my right to speech) and positive rights are “entitlement” rights (you must provide the resources for me to get an education). We’ve lived in a long era of positive-rights creation.

The American head is to think what he has a right to; and therefore what others owe him. Judaism begins with duties,<sup>30</sup> and regards it as a privilege to be more rather than less commanded. Thus we wish a person *תזכה למצוות*, may he merit to fulfill more of that which he is commanded.

*Robert J. Samuelson:*

“Call our era the Age of Entitlement. Stretching from the close of World War II to the mid-1990s, it is best defined by its soaring ambitions. We had a grand vision. We didn’t merely expect things to get better. We expected all social problems to be solved. In our new society, most workers would have rising incomes and stable jobs. Business cycles would disappear. Poverty, racism and crime would recede. Compassionate government would protect the poor, old and unlucky. We expected almost limitless personal freedom and self-fulfillment. We not only expected these things. After a while, we thought we were entitled to them as a matter of right.”

The rights movement has become so profligate and profuse in its claims that the original civil rights idea is collapsing into incomprehensibility. Today, there are animal rights, affirmative action, environmental justice, reproductive rights, golf-club rights, the right to insurance coverage.<sup>31</sup>

NYTimes, Sarah Lyall: *209 Years Later, the English Get American-Style Bill of Rights*: England gets its first domestic bill of rights on Monday. The change comes with the scheduled enforcement of the Human Rights Act, a centerpiece of the Labor government's legislative program, which for the first time incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into English law. England would now have a written bill of rights enshrined in a single document and containing the same sort of guarantees that Americans have had since 1791.... "We have always trusted the executive and judiciary to protect our rights, but it's been a matter of trust only," he said. "This document sets out in clear terms what these rights are." As far back as 1215, Magna Carta began to define the limits of the powers of Britain's rulers. But Britain does not have a written constitution nor an American-style bill of rights. Instead, its citizens have always had what are known as negative rights — that is, they have been allowed to do anything they want, unless there is a law specifically forbidding it. "We've always relied on the silence of the law. If the law doesn't say that you can't do it, you can do

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<sup>30</sup> Mitzvos such as *Tochacha*, *Areivus* and loving our fellow man make it clear that our headspace should be what we can give, spiritually and physically, rather than what we can take. The corollary of this is that the question which a Jew asks is not “What are my rights?” but rather “What are my duties?” We regard it as a privilege to have responsibilities, not a burden. It is anti-Jewish to say, “This is your problem, not mine.”

In Western law, the starting point is rights. My right creates a duty in you. I have a right to my property. You have a duty not to trespass. In Judaism there are also rights and duties. But the stress is different. A Jew starts out by asking what his duties are, not what his rights are. For more on this point, see the *Ner LeElef* book on American Society.

<sup>31</sup> Daniel Hennigegeger, *Wall St. Journal*

it. But we started finding that rights we thought we had were cut back. "What we are getting now for the first time ever are rights that are ours, that are written down, that are easy to understand, that you can teach in schools and that you can enforce in courts," she said...Britain signed the European convention in 1953 but because of a lack of political enthusiasm has not made it a part of domestic law until now. The convention sets out a range of positive rights like the right to freedom of expression, the right to a fair trial and the right to privacy. In the past, Britons who felt that their rights had been violated by the government or by public authorities had to take their cases to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, an arduous process that could drag on for as long as five years.... Jack Straw, the home secretary, has been at pains to point out that the rights under the convention are all meant to balance one another, rather than be considered as absolute rights on their own."Nearly all the rights in the convention, except the 'absolutes' against torture and slavery, are qualified or limited in some way," he wrote in *The Guardian*. "They reflect a vision of a human rights culture in which individuals, while exercising their rights, still have an obligation to act responsibly to others and to the wider community."

Geoffrey Robertson, a human rights lawyer at Doughty Street, a law firm, said that for a people with a stirring civil liberties tradition, Britons have been surprisingly acquiescent as their own rights have been diminished by government encroachment. "Britain is perhaps the country in the world that's produced the greatest rhetoric about liberty, from people like Milton and John Locke and Shakespeare, without giving people the rights that the poets and playwrights have articulated so forcefully," he said. "This will give people a new weapon to deploy against bureaucracy, and will help produce a better culture of liberty here."

### **viii- Tolerance – relative morality**

All of the above principles lead to an attitude of great tolerance by citizens, one to the other. People try not to judge other people, at least not whole groups of people. People are entitled to have whatever weird beliefs they like, to act in whatever way they want, to dress as they want, provided that they do not harm others. Even parents try hard not to judge their grown up children (post high school), respecting their right to lead life-styles that are significantly different to their own. Those who are judged by others are terribly offended. As George F. Will puts it (Newsweek, August 30, 1999): “Surely there is a connection between America’s commercial culture and today’s “moral minimalism.” Hall and Lindholm say that “one of Americans’ strongest moral values is a reluctance to impose moral values.” “Today,” says Alan Wolfe of Boston University (in his 1998 book “One Nation After All”), “the Eleventh Commandment is ‘Thou shalt not judge’.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> **The Connection between Tolerance and Pluralism on the one hand, and Relative Morality on the other hand:**

The following was culled from John Gray’s *Two faces of Liberalism* (2000). Gray, who teaches at the London School of Economics, is a leading scholar of the liberal tradition:

Liberalism claims tolerance and pluralism as supreme values. This allows for maximizing personal autonomy, the right for each individual to decide for himself what is right. All humans are essentially equal in their right to decide what is in their own best interests. This does not mean that serious liberal thinkers claim that there are no universal values. All adhere to the idea of universal human rights, for example. But even universal values come into conflict with each other at times, and may have different solutions for different individuals or nations or for the same individual at different times.

Confucians may stress loyalty to family and friends and Protestants may stress individualism. The devout may want a society in which blasphemy is a crime; the prudish may desire a society in which pornography is proscribed. For them, freedom of expression cannot extend to blasphemy or to smut. The defenders of free speech will reply that all are free to turn a deaf ear to offensive speech, or to exercise their own freedom to condemn it, but that restraining it offends against the rights of the pornographer.

Humans will always have reason to live differently. Some will argue for the abolition of blasphemy laws and permitting pornography, and at that point the devout and the prudish have a problem.

There are many forms of life in which humans can thrive. There is no one of them that is best. People who belong to different ways of life need have no disagreement. They may simply be different. No kind of life can be the best for everyone, the liberals claim. No life can reconcile fully the rival values that the human good contains. Individuals need to learn to honor conflicting values to a life in common.

Among the many kinds of good lives that humans can live there are some that are neither better nor worse than one another, nor the same in worth, but incommensurably – that is to say, differently – valuable. It is not that there can be no right solution. Rather, there are many.

Personal autonomy and romantic love are highly valued; but these rival goods are far from being valued by everyone. The fact that ways of life honor different goods and virtues is not a mark of imperfection. It is a sign that humans can live well in different ways.

There can be no such thing as an ideal life. There may be a best life for any individual; but not one that is without loss; none that meets fully every legitimate claim. There are better and worse regimes, and some that are thoroughly illegitimate; but none that fully realizes all universal values, and is thereby a model for all the rest.

Human needs make conflicting demands. The lives of a professional soldier and a carer in a leprosarium, of a day trader on the stock market and a contemplative in a monastery, cannot be mixed without loss. Such lives embody virtues that do not easily coexist; and they may express beliefs that are contradictory. Yet each answers to a human need.

The plurality of values means that there are many kinds of life in which humans can thrive. Where these lives are so different from one another that their worth cannot be compared, they need not be antagonists; they may be alternatives. If we choose among them, as sometimes we must, the choice need not be tragic. It may simply bespeak the abundance of flourishing lives that is open to us.

There is the way of life of religious fundamentalists and secular liberals, of countryfolk and ‘young urban professionals’, of Taliban and Quakers, of first-generation immigrants and that of their children, of Homer’s warrior-class, the Desert Fathers and twenty-first-century Hasids, and indefinitely many more.

Liberals recognize that we do not need common values in order to live together in peace. We need common institutions in which many forms of life can coexist. But these are only a few values among the many.

There are universals, peace and justice for example. Without courage and prudence no life can go well. Without sympathy for the suffering and happiness of others, justice cannot be maintained. And in fact, liberals do claim that different ways of life can be more or less successful in achieving universal goods, mitigating universal evils and in resolving conflicts among them. But liberals also claim that sometimes these values make demands that are incompatible. When peace and justice are rivals, which is worse, war or injustice? There is no one right

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answer to this, say the liberals. Justice, they say, does not speak always with one voice. The communities that are locked in conflict in Israel and Ulster may claim that they invoke the same principles of justice. Yet their judgements of what is just and what unjust in the context of their contemporary conflicts are deeply at odds. In part, this reflects their different interpretations of their shared history. Partly, no doubt, it is also an expression of the fact that their interests are in many ways opposed.

The most fundamental differences amongst ways of life arise from the manner in which they deal with conflicts among values that are universal. Universal values enable us to assess particular ways of life; but they do not add up to a universal morality.

Universal values are often in real conflict. Toppling a tyranny may trigger civil war. Protecting a broad range of liberal freedoms may result in the regime that guarantees them being short-lived. At the same time, supporting a strong state as a bulwark against anarchy may worsen the abuse of power.

Justice itself makes incompatible demands. When justice requires that restitution be made for injustice done to communities in the past, the result may be unjust to present generations. A claim for the return of land that was unjustly expropriated may collide with a no less just claim to the land that is based on generations of working it. Such conflicts do not arise from an imperfect sense of justice. They express the truth that justice itself encompasses conflicting values.

Even if a conception of justice could be formulated that received universal assent, it would make conflicting demands about which reasonable people could differ. Once again, this is not because human reason is imperfect. It is because incompatible solutions of such conflicts can be equally reasonable.

Recent liberal thinkers claim that the appropriate response to the fact of pluralism is a 'theory of justice'. The 'political liberalism' of John Rawls and his followers claims to advance an account of justice that can be accepted by people who have different conceptions of the good. According to this recent orthodoxy, the liberal state is not just one among a number of regimes that can be legitimate. It is the only mode of political organization that can ever be fully legitimate. In recent liberal thought this claim is conjoined with another – that what makes a liberal state legitimate is its protection of human rights.

However, if we cannot agree as to what the good life is, then we will also differ as to which rights we have.

It is the same with social justice. No contemporary society contains a consensus on fairness that is deep or wide enough to ground a 'theory of justice'.

As a result, there is even less consensus on what justice means than there is on the character of the good. Liberal philosophers differ about the most fundamental requirements of justice. Today, most liberal thinkers affirm that justice is the supreme virtue of social institutions; but some declare that it demands equal distribution of social goods, others that it requires respect for the supposed fact that each of us owns his or her natural endowments, yet others that it involves matching resources with basic needs or merits – and still others that it has nothing to do with distribution at all. Such differences are to be expected. They mirror differences in moral outlook in the wider society. When recent liberal thinkers tell us that the demands of justice must take priority over any ideal of the good, they appear to have overlooked the fact that different views of the good support different views of justice. Egalitarian legalists, such as Rawls and Dworkin, think we have welfare rights to resources, whereas libertarian legalists such as Nozick and Hayek insist that the only human rights are rights against aggression and coercion. These are fundamental differences. They reflect different beliefs about whether human beings can be said to own themselves, how they acquire property rights in natural resources, and what their well-being consists in.

Each supposes that principles of justice and rights can be formulated that are at once highly determinate and ideally universal.

Libertarian liberals such as Nozick believe that a universal economic system is required by justice. For them, rights of property and laws of contract are not social and legal conventions, which can reasonably vary in accord with the changing requirements of human well-being. They are direct applications of universal human rights. It is not merely that modern economies cannot prosper without well-functioning market institutions. Rather, the institutions of the market embody timeless dictates of justice. Indeed, in this strange view, only a single type of market economy – the highly singular type of capitalism found intermittently in some English-speaking countries over the past century or so – is fully compatible with the demands of justice.

Thinking of market freedoms in this way, as derivations from fundamental human rights, is a fundamental error. Like other human freedoms, the freedoms embodied in market institutions are justified inasmuch as they meet human needs. Insofar as they fail to do this they can reasonably be altered. This is true not only of the rights that are involved in market institutions. It is true of all human rights.

Market institutions are good because they allow individuals and communities animated by rival and (in part) incommensurable values to interact by replacing destructive conflict by beneficial competition. As such they do promote pluralism and autonomy, but only when they are complemented by other, non-market institutions. Without the 'positive' freedoms conferred by enabling welfare institutions, the 'negative' liberties of the market are of limited value.

In addition, insofar as different ways of life have different ideals of the good, they will think of issues of distribution differently. A strongly individualist way of life will take for granted that the social unit of distribution is the individual. Others will nominate the family or intermediate social institutions for that purpose.

Liberal legalists aim to circumvent conflict about the good life by appealing to ideas of justice and rights. But the right can never be prior to the good. Without the content that can be given it only by a conception of the good, the right is empty.

David Oshinsky<sup>33</sup> has pointed out that in the 1960's and 70's, the growth of "liberation" movements led many women, blacks, gays and other groups to demand their own distinctive, "usable past." Increasingly, younger, politically correct historians shifted their emphasis from the public life of the nation to the private lives of its citizens. By the 1980's an explosion of historical categories – race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality – had supplanted the more traditional fields of political, diplomatic and intellectual history. Those formerly on the margins of American society now got the lion's share of attention. Each group gets to tell its own story, on its own terms, in its own "authentic" voice. There was a loss of a sense of the larger scheme of things. As a result, fewer people are seeking historians as a guide to the wisdom about the past. With some exceptions, the most widely read narratives in American history are no longer written by academic historians; and even the freshest theories connecting America's past and present are appearing in the books of "outsiders," like the journalist Michael Lind's New American Nation, published in 1995, and the economist Robert Fogel's Fourth Great Awakening, released a few months ago.

This wasn't always the case. Grand narratives and big theories once dominated the writing of American history. From George Bancroft and Frederick Jackson Turner in the 19th Century through Charles and Mary Beard, Richard Hofstadter and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. in later years, the great historians combined elegant prose and sweeping synthesis in ways that are rarely seen today.

Some have asserted that Western values are all relative<sup>34</sup>. Indeed, as Allan Bloom has shown in *"The Closing of the American Mind"*, in academic circles, this is often the case. Western classical texts, Bloom states, are ignored in favor of studying other cultures. But these are not studied so much to learn the lessons they have to offer; rather they are studied as an exercise in tolerance in and of itself. For if we did learn from other cultures, we would know that particularism is the order of the day.

A Zogby International poll of college seniors – 97 percent – said their college studies had prepared them to behave ethically in their future work lives. College students report they are being well prepared ethically by teachers who tell them, in effect, that there are no real ethical standards, so anything goes.<sup>35</sup>

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The requirements of justice are not everywhere the same. Because expectations vary from society to society, what is just in one may be unjust in another. What justice demands is not a matter of subjective preference, but it varies with history and circumstances.

<sup>33</sup> NY Times, 28 August, 2000.

<sup>34</sup> The roots of relative morality go back to the 18C, when David Hume argued that it wasn't logically possible to argue about what ought to be done from any sort of observations about the world, because statements of what ought to be the case are different in kind to statements of what is the case. If Hume was right then trying to base any sort of ethical system on objective facts may just be impossible in principle. And this might lead us to conclude that ethics is all a matter of opinion. Although Emmanuel Kant restored the absoluteness of ethics, many 20C philosophers returned to the idea of relative ethics, G.E. Moore, the existentialists, the postmodernists and many others.

<sup>35</sup> The following is quoted from a book review by Jeff Jacoby (Gertrude Himmelfarb: One Nation, Two Cultures): It is no secret, Himmelfarb writes, that a lack of moral authority pervades contemporary American life. Americans consistently tell pollsters that "moral decay" or "moral decline" is one of the nation's severest problems, and it is a belief that has grown more pronounced over time. In 1965, 52 percent of the public felt that "people in general do not lead lives as honest and moral as they used to"; by 1998 no fewer than 71 percent shared that view. Likewise, the proportion believing that "young people today do not have as strong a sense of right and wrong as they did 50 years ago" climbed from 46 percent in 1965 to 70 percent in 1998.... No liberal or conservative "seriously disputes the prevalence (even glorification) of violence, vulgarity and promiscuity in videos and rap music, or denies their degrading effects.... Nor do many people today seriously doubt the inadequacy of education at all levels, or the fragility of communal ties, or the coarsening and debasement of the culture, or the 'defining down' of morality, public and private. It is no mean achievement to have reached at least this point of consensus." But while Americans may agree that society has been demoralized, many—perhaps most—are

nevertheless unwilling to pass moral judgment on others. They shrink from appearing “judgmental” or “moralistic”—terms that are now used only as pejoratives. “They habitually take refuge,” Himmelfarb writes, “in such equivocations as ‘Who is to say what is right or wrong?’ or ‘Personally, I disapprove of pornography, but that is only my own opinion.’” Moral judgment has become so uncommon that its appearance is big news. When Senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut used the word “immoral” in 1998 to describe President Clinton’s behavior with Monica Lewinsky, it made headlines around the country. Yet the problem is not that Americans lack principles; it is that they feel they have no right to apply their principles to others. Thus, while 75 percent of the public believes that adultery is wrong, according to one recent survey, two-thirds of those who personally know women who have had adulterous affairs do not “think less” of them as a result. And what is true of the public generally is intensified among the young, particularly those who have been steeped in the ethos of multiculturalism prevalent in the educational system.... And so college professors find their students “responding sympathetically to human sacrifice as practiced by the Aztecs or the scalping of enemies by Indians.” Or doubting whether the Nazis were “morally wrong.”

What happened? The conventional answer, especially among conservatives, is that the 1960s happened. Authority, tradition and sexual restraint were undone by a tsunami of social shocks: Civil rights, the pill, television, the anti-war movement, the swelling of the welfare state, the Baby Boom. Any one of these developments would have changed American life. All of them together fueled a cultural revolution that profoundly altered American society, as the old culture based on moral authority gave way to a new one based on permissiveness (or “tolerance”). In the new culture, traditional morality was no longer something to be enforced—not by government, not by civil society, not even by social pressure—but instead became a matter of “personal preference.” ...Himmelfarb accepts this conventional explanation, but her analysis goes further. The radicals of the 1960s, she points out, were raised during the 1950s. That was when the real seeds of change were sown. It was then that Dr. Spock’s views on child-rearing accustomed an entire generation to the principle of permissiveness. It was then that the writings of Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg first set the counterculture stirring. It was then that the GI Bill doubled the number of students exposed to the intellectual trends of campus life, dramatically intensifying the effect of the new thinking on society’s moral instincts. And it was then that opposition to McCarthyism and the atom bomb gave many young adults their first taste of organized dissent. All this happened in an era of burgeoning capitalism, when new wealth was enriching tens of millions of Americans. In Himmelfarb’s view, this new prosperity and the capitalist ethic which brought it about played a significant role in setting off the cultural explosions of the next decade. She cites Joseph Schumpeter, who had argued in 1942 that the very success of capitalism tends to subvert the society that makes it possible. “Capitalism creates a critical frame of mind,” he wrote, “which, after having destroyed the moral authority of so many other institutions, in the end turns against its own.” Decades before the rates of divorce and illegitimacy went through the roof, he foresaw that capitalism and the affluence it generated would threaten the “disintegration of the bourgeois family.” Daniel Bell later refined the argument. While a free market cannot function without self-discipline and deferred gratification, he noted in The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism (1976), the wealth it generates inevitably stimulates appetite, self-indulgence and an impatience with restraint. The outcome, sooner or later, is social degeneration. Endorsing this analysis, Himmelfarb declares that the success of capitalism has “taken its toll on the moral life of society...” Himmelfarb’s portrait of America’s moral decline is undeniably well-researched. But does capitalism really deserve to be blamed for today’s moral corrosion? The connection between affluence and decay is far from clear; in fact, it may be fairer to say that business is a bulwark *against* moral slovenliness. “Business has a vested interest in virtue,” writes Michael Novak, the renowned Catholic theologian, in Business as a Calling (1996). “It cannot endure without leaders and colleagues in whom many key virtues are internalized.... Business is dependent on the moral and cultural institutions of the free society.” Indeed, much of the popular literature on effectiveness and productivity that has appeared in recent years encourages precisely those traits which reinforce a moral order and which successful individuals often inculcate in their children: Self-restraint, responsibility, faith and order, as well as the ability to absorb and apply the wisdom of others. Hollywood typically caricatures capitalists as greedy villains, but the reality seems altogether different....

But if capitalism is not to blame for the moral decay that is so characteristic of Americans today, what is? Here is one possible answer: What paved the way for our contemporary disarray was not the burgeoning of American wealth, but the burgeoning of American government. The role of civil society in building and enforcing moral norms has been widely discussed in recent years. Through voluntary organizations, particularly religious ones, citizens come to understand and believe in the role they have to play within society. And far from being hamstrung by capitalism, civil society thrives on it.... But there is a more fundamental way in which economic freedom and moral virtue go hand in hand. Where markets operate freely and the role of government is sharply circumscribed, the principal way in which a law-abiding citizen acquires wealth is by earning it. And the way one earns wealth in a capitalist system is by serving others. No one can make money in a market economy unless he provides something that other people want. You are rewarded when your customer is rewarded. You benefit yourself by first benefiting others. Which means that the prosperity that tends to characterize market-oriented societies is the result not just of economic forces but of moral ones, too: Honesty, cooperation, trust, sympathy, concern for the needs of others. “For the first time in human history,” Walter Lippmann wrote in 1937, reflecting on the great diffusion of wealth in the Western world since the rise of modern commerce, “men had come upon a way of producing wealth in which the good fortune of others multiplied their own.... It had not occurred to many men before that the Golden Rule was economically sound.” This is not to say, of course, that capitalism automatically makes men moral, or that honest and compassionate people cannot be found in societies not distinguished by free markets. It *is* to say that capitalism tends to reinforce the virtues and standards that keep

The results show the dominance on campuses of postmodern thought, including the belief that objective standards are a sham perpetrated by the powerful to serve their own interests.

Several years ago, a college professor in upstate New York reported that 10 percent to 20 percent of his students could not bring themselves to criticize the Nazi extermination of Europe's Jews.

There is no truth, just narratives and stories that “work” for particular communities.

Since “truth” is an act of community empowerment, truth is whatever the tribe or the individual says it is. This is why debate and argument have disappeared from the modern campus – to criticize anyone's ideas is a personal assault, like attacking someone for liking chocolate ice cream. This notion that disagreement is an assault helps explain the venomous treatment of dissenters on campus – canceled speakers, stolen newspapers, ripped-down posters, implausible violations of hate-speech rules, and many other hallmarks of the modern campus (John Leo in *U.S. News & World Report*).

But the average American does believe that there are a lot of absolute values. Even the most vociferous of moral relativists will admit to a set of core values such as murdering and stealing, which he agrees are absolute.<sup>36</sup> In addition, the average American believes strongly

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society civil, and to keep selfish and greedy tendencies in check. Since success in a free-market society depends on possessing many of the habits of moral virtue, those habits will usually be encouraged. But as government expands, making more and more of the decisions previously left to the private sector, the opposite happens. Behavior driven by mutual benefit gives way to behavior driven by politics. The voluntariness of market transactions is replaced by the coercion of government directives. Where capitalism inculcates respect for the property of others, statism—which teaches that wealth may be redistributed by the government—encourages covetousness and resentment. If A has and B doesn't, the cry goes out for the government to take more from A so that B's “unmet needs” can be fulfilled. ...America's Victorian values were not undermined by the dramatic growth in industry and commerce that transformed the nation in the last half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. Civil society could assimilate vast new wealth. What it couldn't assimilate was the dramatic expansion of government which began in the 1930s and reached its peak in a “War on Poverty” that encouraged poor Americans not to work and not to form stable families. What it couldn't assimilate was the relentless intrusion of state and federal regulations into virtually every aspect of American life. What it couldn't assimilate was a convoluted tax code that taught taxpayers that honesty is a sucker's game. Above all, what it couldn't assimilate was the proliferation of programs that treated Americans like children who cannot be trusted to run their own lives. For the effect of that infantilization was to erode the adult virtues that healthy society depends on: Work, honesty, discipline, fidelity, temperance, thrift, initiative. Nor is that all. As the welfare state swells, assuming functions that used to be left to individuals and private organizations, communities are weakened. Concern for the well-being of others is dulled. After all, if the government is going to take care of the hungry, why should I feed them? If politicians and bureaucrats are going to take care of every social problem, why should I join a community group or send money to a voluntary agency? A key factor in convincing people to take care of one another is the understanding that their help is not only meritorious but *needed*: That unless they act, others will suffer. By taking responsibility for the needy, government accustoms the average citizen to thinking that his charity and help are no longer necessary. As a result, he spends less time thinking about the misfortunes of others. And what is true of individuals is true in the aggregate. All through the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s, as the United States was growing richer and richer, Americans were giving greater and greater proportions of their wealth to philanthropy. “Then, suddenly, sometime during 1964-1965, in the middle of an economic boom, this consistent trend was reversed,” Charles Murray wrote in 1988. “The proportion of wealth being given away began to fall even though wealth continued to increase. The trend continued through the rest of the 1960s, throughout the 1970s, and then suddenly reversed itself again in 1981 (during a period of hard times), when a new administration came to office that once more seemed to be saying: ‘If you don't do it, nobody will.’” Yet Himmelfarb shies away from blaming government for the country's moral and cultural diseases. “The arguments against ‘big government’ are well taken, but they should not translate into arguments against law or government per se,” she cautions. In their eagerness to rein in the “nanny state,” libertarian-minded conservatives “risk belittling, even delegitimizing, the state itself.” Politics may be in disrepute these days, but the state still deserves “the enthusiastic service and loyalty of its citizens.”

<sup>36</sup> He may argue that there are times when these do not apply; but he will agree that under normal circumstances they do.

in many other things. But he respects the right of anyone else to disagree.<sup>37</sup> Thus there may be vociferous debates about abortion, euthanasia or the death penalty – and most Americans take sides in these debates<sup>38</sup> – but both sides are expected to ultimately have their views respected only as an opinion, not as a gospel.

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<sup>37</sup> Hall and Lindholm argue that moral tolerance in America goes further, to the point where Americans are reluctant to impose their values on anyone else. If this is true, then this does amount to moral relativism (in *Is America Breaking Apart*, 1999). Alan Wolfe writes that for an American, the Eleventh Commandment is “Thou shalt not judge.” (*In One Nation After All*, 1998) – both quoted by George F. Will in *Newsweek*, August 30, 1999.

Thomas Hayden, *Dissent; Agreeing to Disagree* U.S. News & World Report, June 28/ July 5, 2004: ...America is a country – and a culture – founded on dissent. That nation was born in the most obvious form of protest, an armed rebellion against the legal authority of the day. Several of our national celebrations – Columbus Day, Independence Day, Martin Luther King Day, maybe even April Fools’ Day – mark the power of rebellion and thumbing one’s nose at the accepted order of things. But to suggest that this is a nation of dissenters is to disregard broad swaths of American history and political and cultural development. Dissent helped shape America, but America is also a nation built on cohesion and the enforcement of common goals and shared values. Those two competing impulses – which drove the Massachusetts Bay colonists to flee the religious restrictions of England and then establish one of the most strictly conformist societies in history – appear again and again throughout our history....Alexis de Tocqueville in *Democracy in America*, the astute French chronicler of early America wrote, “I know of no country in which there is so little independence of mind and real freedom of discussion as in America.”...dissent in American history is very episodic, with short bursts of activity interspersed by long periods of going along with the prevailing conditions.

<sup>38</sup> October 29, 2003: Dennis Prager, *The Second American Civil War*. Whatever your politics, you have to be oblivious to reality to deny that America today is torn by ideological divisions as deep as those of the Civil War era. We are, in fact, in the midst of the Second American Civil War. Of course, one obvious difference between the two is that this Second Civil War is (thus far) non-violent. On the other hand, there is probably more hatred between the opposing sides today than there was during the First Civil War. The two sides’ values and visions of America are as incompatible as they were in the 1860’s. While the views of many, probably even most, Americans do not fall entirely on either side, the two competing camps are quite distinguishable. On one side are those on the Left – liberals, leftists and Greens – who tend to agree with one another on almost all major issues. On the other side are those on the Right – conservatives, rightists and libertarians – who agree on stopping the Left, but differ with one another more often than those on the Left do. The Left believes in removing America’s Judeo-Christian identity, e.g., removing “under G-d” from the Pledge, “In G-d We Trust” from the currency, the oath to G-d and country from the Boy Scouts Pledge, etc. The Right believes that destroying these symbols and this identity is tantamount to destroying America. The Left regards America as morally inferior to many European societies with their abolition of the death penalty, cradle-to-grave welfare and religion-free life; and it does not believe that there are distinctive American values worth preserving. The Right regards America as the last best hope for humanity and believes that there are distinctive American values – the unique combination of a religious (Judeo-Christian) society, a secular government, personal liberty and capitalism – worth fighting and dying for. The Left believes that impersonal companies, multinational and otherwise, with their insatiable drive for profits, have a profoundly destructive effect on the country... The Left believes that “war is not the answer.” The Right believes that war is often the only answer to governmental evil. Any one of these differences is enough to create an entirely different America.... I am well aware that not everyone on the Left agrees with every leftist position and not everyone on the Right agrees with every rightist one. Nat Hentoff is a leftist who doesn’t support abortion rights; Pat Buchanan is a rightist who doesn’t support Israel. But the existence of individual exceptions does not negate the fact that all the positions listed here as Left or Right are correctly labeled. The fact is that this country is profoundly divided on virtually every major social, personal and political issue. We are in the midst of the Second American Civil War. Who wins it will determine the nature of this country as much as the winner of the first did.

Robin Toner, *The Culture Wars, Part II*: February 29, 2004: It became an emblematic moment: Patrick Buchanan, standing before the Republican National Convention in August 1992, bluntly declaring that there was a “religious war” and a “cultural war” under way for the soul of the country. And that “Clinton and Clinton are on the other side,” with an agenda of “radical feminism,” “abortion on demand” and “homosexual rights.” The cultural gulf between left and right, liberal and social conservative, secularist and fundamentalist, had rarely yawned so wide, nor has it since, some analysts say. The parties are increasingly polarized, and many of their core constituents are in an uncompromising mood. The courts have been pushing the envelope on issues like gay rights, just as they did on abortion. Social and religious conservatives feel under siege, furious over what they see as judicial tyranny that is removing traditional values, one by one, from the public square. “I have not seen any issue that mobilizes my constituency like same sex marriage, not even the abortion issue,” said Dr. Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. “Once you start redefining marriage, where do you stop? I’m still waiting for someone to give me that answer.” Michael Novak, a theologian

The more radical expressions of relative morality tend to exist in insulated academic circles. Sociology departments “deconstruct” all beliefs, reducing them to jargonese. But more often than not, the relativism of these professors is simple intellectual dishonesty. Books which fit their agenda are accepted as true, even when they are known to be factually incorrect. Thus when Rigoberto Manchu’s 1983 book, which won her a Nobel Prize, was shown to be greatly invented (David Stoll – Rigoberto Manchu and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans) many who were teaching it on campuses reacted as did Marjorie Agosin of the Spanish Department at Wellesley College, “Whether her book is true or not, I don’t care.” (In U.S. News and World Report, Jan. 25, 1999, pg. 17)

Similarly, it is now standard for school boards to sanitize texts to fit in with the prevailing, politically correct norms not to offend any culture or group of people. In 2002, to meet sensitivity guidelines, the New York Regents test had removed or changed language in literary passages deemed potentially offensive, including references to Jews and Gentiles from a passage by Isaac Bashevis Singer. After an uproar, the state education commissioner said the scrubbing would stop. The Regents test was following New York’s education department guidelines, “to guarantee that all people are depicted in accord with their dignity.”

The United States Postal Service worked a subtle sleight on stamps featuring the artist Jackson Pollock and the blues singer Robert Johnson. The stamps used familiar photographs of the subjects, but with a twist: in the originals, the men are smoking; in the stamps, the cigarettes are missing. A bit of reality goes up in smoke.<sup>39</sup>

John Leo reports: The diversity movement comes in two versions – a soft multiculturalism that simply wants recognition for all of America’s cultures, and a hard version bristling with hostility to whites and white “hegemony.” On campus the soft version (extend the curriculum to include other cultures) faded quickly into the hard version of bitter assaults on any study of “dead white males.” The hard version was on display last week when Brooklyn’s new borough president, Marty Markowitz, announced that diversity required “taking down the old white guys.” So he removed a portrait of George Washington from his office. ...

Museums are under pressure to produce “gender-fair” exhibits with half the works by women, even in shows about eras in which virtually all painters were men. Out of concern for the self-esteem of minority students, history texts routinely do the same false balancing act, mugging the truth so all cultures end up with at least as much achievement as the West, preferably more<sup>40</sup>.

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at the American Enterprise Institute, said, "Many of those who are alarmed by the claiming of the title of marriage by homosexuals feel the issue is being thrust upon them. They feel on the defensive. They see themselves as getting pushed around." Many Americans reside in the ambivalent middle on these issues - opposed to gay marriage, for example, but more divided on a constitutional amendment. Some Democratic strategists assert that many voters are even uncomfortable with these issues being debated in a political campaign. Still, Andrew Kohut, director of the Pew Center, argued that Americans are in the midst of a striking change in their attitudes toward homosexuality and are far more tolerant of basic rights than they were 15 years ago. But there is a backlash at the idea of gay marriage, particularly among older Americans, he said. Many analysts note that the country has changed in other ways since the late 1980's and early 1990's, when cultural or wedge issues were in their heyday. Stan and Anna Greenberg, two Democratic pollsters, recently wrote in *The American Prospect* that "while the cultural battle lines on abortion, homosexuality and guns remain," America is "more diverse, more secular, better educated and more socially progressive" than it was in 1988. Ms. Greenberg also took the long view, saying the country was changing so fast that "it's really likely in 10 or 20 years that people won't understand what all the fuss was about." "There's a whole generation of people growing up who just don't think about these issues in the same way," she said.

<sup>39</sup> As reported by John Leland in the NY Times, June, '02.

<sup>40</sup> John Leo in U.S. News & World Report, January 28/Feb. 4, 2002

Paul Johnson writes in his The Quest for God: “Both the great evil philosophies of the century, Nazism and Communism, were morally relativistic; they argued that ‘the revolutionary conscience’ or the ‘higher law of the Party’ were superior to the ancient prescriptive moral wisdom of humanity, expressed in the Decalogue-Natural law and Divine law. The arrogant insistence of these two totalitarian systems, that they made up their own laws and imposed and changed them at will ....” (pg. 67)

Margaret Talbot<sup>41</sup> wrote that in the 80’s and 90’s, multiculturalism became a new word on American campuses. There was a lot of talk about overthrowing the “dead white males,” who were seen as the enemy of this idea. Ironically, during the very years when the multicultural movement was extending its influence, the study of foreign languages was falling into a general malaise.<sup>42</sup> And for all the multiculti buzz about respecting and exploring other cultures, the number of students who studied abroad remained tiny, the length of their stays got shorter and the list of countries they preferred – Germany, England, France – scarcely diversified. (How many parents, footing the bill, want to send their junior to, say, Uzbekistan? How many college students, laser-focused on landing a job on Wall Street or a slot in law school, want to put their G.P.A.’s at risk by studying, say, Urdu?)<sup>43</sup>

It is odd that a movement so flamboyantly dedicated to the celebration of cultural diversity did so little to check our tendencies to cultural isolationism. In fact, it may have reinforced them, by lulling us into the sense that we were getting a resoundingly global education when all we were really getting was a little Arundhati Roy here, a little Toni Morrison there. (In multiculturalism, somehow, black American culture was cast as other, even alien, when in fact it is as inextricably and influentially American as a culture can be.) Multiculturalism was easy, whereas deep knowledge of another place, predicated as it usually is on linguistic competence, is hard. Besides, the impulse behind multiculturalism was politicized inclusion. You were meant to reach out to groups with historical grievances against the white male population of the United States and to celebrate their accomplishments. It was the upbeat ethnic-festival approach, which is nice, but which also allows you to leave out a lot of groups, like those that speak difficult languages or live in rough neighborhoods of the world or don’t seem to treat women particularly well.

John Leo wrote the following article in the U.S. News & World Report, August 13, 2001, *My Morals, Myself*:

Alan Wolfe thinks that the United States, is now “morally speaking, a new society.” Americans are as morally serious as ever, Wolfe says, but they are not longer willing to follow old rules. ...He writes in his new book, Moral Freedom: The Search for Virtue in a World of Choice:

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<sup>41</sup> The following two paragraphs are based on an article she wrote for the NY Times Magazine section, Nov. 2001.

<sup>42</sup> Enrollments were dropping, the ranks of competent language instructors thinning out and foreign-language requirements quietly disappearing. For example, according to the American Council on Education, 34 percent of all four-year American colleges and universities made foreign-language study a graduation requirement in 1965, while only 20 percent do now. Since the 60’s, the percentage of college students enrolled in language classes has shrunk by half.

There are plenty of reasons that Americans don’t flock to language study, from geographic isolation to our traditional assimilationist credo to the widespread use of English. We don’t have to! (The following appeared in U.S. News & World Report, July 2, 2001, *Languages with most speakers*: English – 478 million, French—125 million, Portuguese—184 million, Arabic—225 million, Russian—284 million, Spanish—392 million, Hindi—437 million, Chinese (Mandarin)—1.2 billion)

<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile, disciplines that might once have sponsored in-depth study of other cultures – political science, for example – were taken over by scholars who eschewed fieldwork in favor of computer models and game theory.

Wolfe thinks the traditional sources of moral authority (churches, families, neighborhoods, civic leaders) have lost the ability to influence people. In part, this is the result of appalling behavior by so many authority figures (lying presidents, pedophile priests, corrupt corporate executives, etc.). And as more and more areas of American life have become democratized and open to consumer “choice,” people have come to assume that they have the right to determine for themselves what it means to lead a good and virtuous life.

Americans are now unwilling to tell others how to live. Non-judgmentalism pushes us to interpret immoral behavior as a result of medical or genetic problems. The perpetrator is not at fault; he is the helpless victim of bad genes or a medical-psychiatric problem.

Much of the book analyzes various virtues and argues that Americans uphold the old virtues in principle while in practice turning them into personal “options.” Americans prize loyalty, but in an age of easy divorce and mass corporate layoffs, loyalty is now seen as conditional. The same is true of honesty. Success today, Wolfe writes, often depends on managing the impressions of other people – a form of dissimulation. Honesty is no longer the best policy. It is a general mandate, strategically applied.

Subscribers to the new moral order can have it both ways – strong principles with a built-in escape hatch. This would explain much of the gap between polls on moral issues and actual behavior. One L.A. Times poll, for instance, shows that 57 percent of Americans think abortion is a form of murder. An annual survey of college freshmen consistently shows that about half of those polled think abortion should be illegal. Yet the prevalence of abortion points to a more relaxed moral standard when the chips are down.

August 29, 2002, 9:00 a.m.

#### Lesson Plans

September 11 in the classroom.

Combined and modified articles by National Review Editors, from the September 16, 2002, issue of National Review and John O’Sullivan:

To understand how far multiculturalism has gone, and how it affects all other values, one need only look at the advice the National Education Association (the NEA) dished out on how to spend the first anniversary of September 11. (Sep, 2002). Students would hear a lot about “intolerance”: the need to avoid it, America’s shameful history of the “internment of Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbor and the backlash against Arab Americans during the Gulf War are obvious examples.” The stress is on relativism, away from patriotism or America’s virtues and not a word about our enemies’ deadly intolerance. Overall, the mood is mildly adversarial toward Americans, who are assumed to be constantly on the verge of committing ethnic pogroms.

There must be no stereotyping of Muslims in general because the terrorists who committed the crimes of 9/11 were Muslim, but the Americans can be reasonably blamed even for things that never happened, such as the backlash against Arab Americans during the Gulf War. We are the first ethnocentric masochists: We blame ourselves, and excuse others, for all crimes<sup>44</sup>,

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<sup>44</sup>*On Society: Learning to Love Terrorists*, by John Leo, U.S. News & World Report, Oct. 8, 2001: ...anthropologist at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill said she was pleased that her students’ “thoughtful, passionate varieties of anger are openings to reflection, learning.”... Worse, the words the rest of the nation is using – “attack,” “terrorism,” “resolve,” and “defense” – don’t seem to come up much on campus. Umpteen college presidents put out timid statements about coping with “the tragedy,” and “the events of September 11”... The American Association of University Professors... promised to “continue to fight violence with renewed dedication to the exercise of freedom of thought and the expression of that freedom in our teaching.”... Unreal. The campus flight from reality takes many exotic forms. One is the notion that ther

ancient and modern. This syndrome afflicts most national institutions because, they claim, the moral choice is one between multiculturalism and bigotry. In fact, the choice is between a national identity that brings all ethnic groups together and a multicultural identity that separates them into distinct and possibly hostile cultural compartments.

So if you cannot talk about values then you are left talking about feelings. And this is indeed the focus of the lesson plans the NEA has put out. Students would be told that it's okay to feel a variety of emotions and not to judge others. If they are in grades 6 through 12, they may be asked to perform a group exercise called "Remember to Laugh."

For the culture of multi-culturalism, September 11 cannot be understood as an historical event. History is consulted only to the extent that it teaches us that people in previous eras have had feelings of grief and anger after disasters, too, and that these feelings have been expressed in more and less healthy ways. The history of the Middle East is not mentioned anywhere. Islam is a source of "diversity," and the only thing students need know about Muslims is that they are not all alike<sup>45</sup>.

In one of the NEA's links, the school psychologists warn that "[i]ntensive, detailed coverage of the attacks, the terrorists, and/or the threat of future attacks can raise children's anxiety levels." Understanding that we have enemies that mean to do us harm can raise adults' anxiety levels, too, and should. Tolerance, diversity, and psychological well-being are all fine things if they are rightly understood. But a country needs other things to defend itself: Things like courage, confidence, endurance, manliness, intelligence. Neither our school curricula nor our public culture is designed to cultivate those qualities.

New York Times Poll, April 2000:

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "I believe it is possible in America to pretty much be who you want to be."

1. Agree 85%
2. Disagree 14%

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terrorists' target wasn't really America. "Students in my classes really see this as an assault on international trade, globalization," said the dean of Columbia University's international affairs school. Another is the attempt to adapt the crisis to the campus fixation on bias crimes. The most animated rally at the University of California – Berkeley was a protest against a campus newspaper for an editorial cartoon showing two Muslim suicide bombers in hell. Many students feel that singling out members of any religious or ethnic group as responsible for the attack is a sort of hate crime. The attack "was done by... people who hate," said one University of Wisconsin students, "and I don't think hate has a color or ethnicity." But the dominant campus notions were ones the terrorists themselves would surely endorse: that America had it coming, and fighting back would be vengeful, unworthy and a risk to the lives of innocents. A speaker at a University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill teach-in called for an apology to the "tortured and impoverished and the millions of other victims of American imperialism." Georgetown University is holding a debate titled "Resolved: America's Policies and Past Actions Invited the Recent Attacks." At a Yale panel, six hand-wringing professors focused on "underlying causes" of the attack and America's many faults, including our "offensive cultural messages." In response, classics professor Donald Kagan said the panelists seemed intent on "blaming the victim" and asked why Yale couldn't find one panelist somewhere to focus on the enemy and "how to stamp out such evil"... A campus culture has arisen around very dangerous ideas. Among them are radical cultural relativism, nonjudgmentalism, and a postmodern conviction that there are no moral norms or truths worth defending – all knowledge and morality are constructions built by the powerful. Add to this the knee-jerk antagonism to the "hegemony" of the West and a reflexive feeling of sympathy for anti-Western resentments, even those expressed in violence.

<sup>45</sup> These have been the culture's lesson plans for adults as well as schoolchildren. The media will, on September 11, talk more about heroes and losses than about terrorism. Our elected leaders have discouraged any deeper engagement with Islam than the NEA recommends.

## *ix- Freedom and immaturity*

Freedom is perhaps the word most used to describe Western societies.<sup>46</sup> Democracy means that people are free to choose their representatives; freedom of speech means that people can say what they want, when they want, where they want; Capitalism means that people are free to make their fortunes<sup>47</sup>. People ought to have freedom of belief. In America, even the freedom to bear arms is a constitutional right.

However, even Americans would agree that people can never be absolutely free. They are not free to break the law, or to even help someone else to break the law; they are not free to harm others or to corrupt minors<sup>48</sup>.

The freedom most talked about in America is Freedom of Speech. Pornography has been protected, as part of this right for people to say what they want. But here, too, many

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<sup>46</sup> Eric Foner, *Not All Freedom Is Made in America*: The war in Iraq seems to be heading for a successful conclusion. But the United States fought for more than military victory; it promised to bring freedom to the Iraqi people. This may prove more complicated than the Bush administration suspects. It may force us to think in new ways about what freedom is, and whether Americans have exclusive access to its meaning. Freedom lies at the heart of our sense of ourselves as individuals and as a nation. The Declaration of Independence lists liberty among mankind's inalienable rights. The Civil War, which began as a struggle to save the Union, became a crusade to extend freedom to four million slaves. The United States fought World War II for the Four Freedoms, the cold war to defend the free world. After a false start in which he gave the war in Afghanistan the theological title Infinite Justice, President Bush rechristened it Enduring Freedom. And we are now engaged in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Freedom quickly emerged as the official explanation for the war against terrorism. "Freedom itself is under attack," President Bush announced in his speech to Congress of Sept. 21, 2001. The National Security Strategy issued last fall begins not with a discussion of global politics or the doctrine of preemptive war, but with an invocation of freedom, defined as political democracy, freedom of expression, religious toleration and free enterprise. These, the document proclaims, "are right and true for every person, in every society."...Foreign observers have often been bemused, to put it politely, by Americans' refusal to consider that other people may have thought about freedom and arrived at conclusions that might be worthy of consideration. When Alexis de Tocqueville visited the United States in the 1830's, he was struck by Americans' conviction that "they are the only religious, enlightened, and free people," and "form a species apart from the rest of the human race."...Desire for freedom certainly seems to be universal. Even those who wish it had been accomplished without weakening international institutions cannot lament the fall of Saddam Hussein's bloody dictatorship. But as the United States embarks on the project of bringing freedom to Iraq, history suggests two notes of caution. One is that far from being timeless and universal, our own definition of freedom has changed many times. The story of freedom is one of debates, disagreements and struggles rather than fixed definitions or uninterrupted progress toward a preordained goal....Nineteenth-century Americans, for example, defined freedom in part as economic autonomy, achieved through owning a farm or small business. This was perfectly compatible with lack of freedom for those dependent on the male head of household, including the women in a family and, in the South, slaves. For much of the 20th century, many Americans thought economic security for ordinary citizens essential to freedom. In the 1960's, the civil rights and feminist movements redefined freedom as equality for those long held down by the larger society, and the counterculture called for freedom in lifestyle and culture....In the last 20 years, in a kind of marriage of 60's personal liberation and free-market economics, the dominant meanings of freedom have centered on political democracy, unregulated free enterprise, low taxes, limited government and individual choice in matters like dress, leisure activities and sexual orientation. Rather than a set of universal principles, this constellation of values is the product of a particular moment and a specific historical experience....Nonetheless, other societies have their own historically developed definitions of freedom and ways of thinking about the social order, which may not exactly match ours. The unregulated free market, for example, can be profoundly destabilizing in societies organized on traditional lines of kinship, ethnicity or community....Prevailing ideas of freedom in the United States... had become so rigid that Americans could no longer appreciate definitions of freedom, common in other countries, related to social justice and economic equality, "and hence are baffled by their use."...Today, if Americans hope to cultivate the growth of liberty in Iraq, Hartz's call for them to engage in a dialogue with the rest of the world about the meaning of freedom seems more relevant than ever.

<sup>47</sup> Most contemporary social scientists link these freedoms. As an economy starts developing, it requires a good legal system, an open market, an emerging middle class, all of which move a society towards democracy.

<sup>48</sup> This was highlighted after the collapse of the Twin Towers, on Sept. 11, 2001. In the States, as elsewhere, all kinds of restrictions were introduced. People were searched more at airports, their banking details were open to greater scrutiny, it became easier for police to introduce wire-taps, and so on.

constraints have been put on freedom of speech where it has clashed with other rights.<sup>49</sup> The most publicized of these are the constraints against verbal sexual abuse which are now a part of the ethics codes of most medium to large companies<sup>50</sup>

A much more problematic result of freedom was that, with the stress towards rights and freedom and away from responsibility, there appeared to be increasing immaturity – moral, emotional and even intellectual – on the part of many Americans. The decline of civility and manners has also been attributed to the idea that I don't owe anyone anything.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> The Supreme Court of America has been forced, over the years, to admit that freedom of expression is not an absolute. In March, 2000, the Supreme Court limited some of nude dancing's freedom-of-expression protections. Nude entertainment is featured in some 3,000 adult clubs nationwide, and until then total nudity was permitted. The court's main opinion has nothing to do with the immorality or indecency. In fact the court merely gave permission to local ordinance to limit total nudity, if they should so choose. In fact, any ban could not be aimed at the act or message of erotic, nude dancing per se. Rather, it should be in the "interest in combating the negative secondary effects associated with adult entertainment establishments," such as crime.

The court was able to justify this by making a fine distinction. Nude dancing is "expressive conduct", they stated but it "falls only within the outer ambit" of First Amendment protection. The nude-dancing ban "is no different than the ban on burning draft registration cards" previously upheld by the Supreme Court, in which the government "sought to prevent the means of the expression and not the expression of antiwar sentiment itself."

Even if the nude-dancing ban "has some minimal effect on the erotic message by muting that portion of the expression that occurs when the last stitch is dropped," Judge O'Connor said, the dancers are free to perform wearing pasties and G-strings, leaving ample capacity to convey the dancer's erotic message. Any effect on overall expression is minimal, she said.

Only a minority of justices, Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas, felt that any part of American society was actually allowed to protect itself from nude dancing because they felt it was immoral. These justices cited "the traditional power of government to foster good morals ... and the acceptability of the traditional judgment ... that nude public dancing itself is immoral."

Three of the justices felt that there were no grounds for banning nude dancing at all.

Declaring for the first time that programming on cable television is entitled to the highest level of First Amendment protection, the Supreme Court, on May 22, 2000, voted 5 to 4 to strike down a federal law that required many cable systems to limit sexually explicit channels to late-night hours. Both sides agreed that shielding children from sexually explicit material, the purpose of the 1996 law, was a legitimate goal, but differed on the degree of constitutional "flexibility" the court should give the government in its effort to protect children. The matter had been brought to court by Playboy Magazine, which has several sexually oriented cable operations.

One of the dissenters Justice Stephen G. Breyer stated: "Our prior cases recognize that where the protection of children is at issue, the First Amendment poses a barrier that properly is high, but not insurmountable." However the majority argued that this argument was not valid because the technology for targeted blocking exists and operators were already required by law to provide an effective blocking device for any subscriber who wanted one. Therefore, the current law was not the "least restrictive means" to achieve the government's goal, and was unconstitutional. "Technology expands the capacity to choose; and it denies the potential of this revolution if we assume the government is best positioned to make these choices for us."

In April 2000, a journalist sent to prison for 18 months for distributing child pornography, lost his federal appeal in Richmond Virginia. He claimed it was part of his research and was protected by the First Amendment.

In the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling, Judge Diana Motz said that distribution of child pornography is a particularly egregious crime and that the law makes no exception for journalists.

<sup>50</sup> The use of foul language has been socially sanctioned though never enforced. Voluntary censoring by the TV networks is an example of this. However, as we describe below under TV, these restrictions have been steadily loosening up with time.

<sup>51</sup> The following article appeared in the U.S. News & World Report, February 26, 2001, *The matter of manners*: In his book *Civility: Manners, Morals, and the Etiquette of Democracy*, Carter argues eloquently that civility is disintegrating because Americans have forgotten the obligations they owe one another and are consumed with self-indulgence.

78 percent of respondents to a CNN/USA Today/Gallup Poll said that in recent years, rude behavior has increased in stores, on highways, and in airports. Nearly 4 out of 5 say more people are getting angry about it than just a few years ago.

The 1950's – where etiquette reigned, civic organizations were strong, and you didn't hear vulgarities on the radio.

Life in the new economy, where freer trade, fiercer competition, and greater efficiency have unleashed capitalism, [has] created a world where, in the words of Intel Chairman Andrew Grove, "only the paranoid

In 1999, John Leo wrote the following article in U.S. News and World Report. It was entitled, *Where Did All The Grown-Ups Go?:*

“... Robert Bly’s book, *The Sibling Society* [reports on] the increasingly adolescent nature of American society. ... He thinks (and he is hardly alone in this) that a great leveling has taken place in America: We increasingly look like a horizontal society of young brothers and sisters, because the vertical principles (authority, hierarchy, obligation, tradition) have all been eroded. We are moving, he says, “from a paternal society, now discredited, to a society in which impulse is given its way. People don’t bother to grow up, and we are all fish swimming in a tank of half-adults.” Though Bly introduces their names gently, Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich come up as examples of “sibling leaders,” which seems to be a polite code for “outstanding semi-adults.”

Like a zillion other social critics, Bly points to television and consumer pressures: Children who once looked to parents and teachers for cues on how to behave now look to TV, advertising, peers or celebrities. The speed of change makes adult advice seem irrelevant, or like the nagging voice of the past. As adults seem more and more adolescent, more and more adolescents seem unconvinced that adult life is worth reaching for. Bly imagines a line separating adults and adolescents, and says, “If the adults do not turn and walk up to this line and help pull the adolescents over, the adolescents will stay exactly where they are for another 20 or 30 years.”

On European streets, he says, American faces stand out for their youthful and naive look, and not simply because of better nutrition and exercise. A century ago, the faces of Americans, immigrants for example, showed a certain set of mouth and jaw that seemed to say, “We’re adults. There’s nothing we can do about it.” Now, the faces of actors such as Kevin Costner, he says, or the average American on the street seem to say: “I’m a child. There’s nothing I can do about it.”

Bly thinks that perhaps a third of allegedly adult Americans are actually half-adults, with most of the rest of us headed that way. Census data show a glimmer here and there of reluctance to accept adult status. In 1990, for example, 21 percent of 25-year-olds were still living with their parents. A University of Michigan survey released this month says that 30 percent of divorced young men and women return to live with their parents after their marriages break up. Economics plays a role, but *American Demographics* magazine says today’s return trip home to mom is so common that it is “losing its stigma as a last resort of the insecure and irresponsible.”

Bly thinks sibling society is marked by an easy egalitarianism (“no one is superior to anyone else”), ecological concern, low interest in the past or the future, an emphasis on pleasure and the rejection of traditional impulse control.

... Bly is right about intellectual trends that help sever the bonds between generations. As a result, what parents and caring adults traditionally do for the young is increasingly viewed in a hostile light. Socialization is seen as indoctrination. Almost any exercise of authority is seen as vaguely undemocratic and perhaps an insult to personhood. The passing on of norms and customs is an unjust “privileging” of some views over others. ...

Ironically, while adults seem never to grow up, children are being treated more and more like adults. If everybody is free to decide whether they are going to grow up or not, then why not children as well.

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survive.” If only the paranoid survive, how can we expect the self-restraint that Carter says is necessary to restore civility?

In *Ready or Not: Why Treating Children as Small Adults Endangers Their Future – and Ours*, Kay S. Hymowitz states that we have gradually been undermining the traditional notion of childhood as a period of protection and apprenticeship, during which adults provide moral guidance to the young. From roughly the mid-19th century to the mid-20th, Americans embraced what Hymowitz calls the doctrine of republican childhood, a bundle of ideas about child rearing that included the rejection of corporal punishment and the encouragement of free play – along with the presumption that the child had to be actively molded by adults into “the independent moral actor demanded by a free society.” By now, though, the old ideology has given way to one both harder to define and more pervasive – one in which warmed-over Romantic notions of the child as a naturally moral creature, faddish educational schemes that seem to call for teaching children only what they think they want to know, and even the kind of sophisticated marketing that seeks to turn toddlers into consumers<sup>52</sup> all combine to render adult authority ever more wobbly and children more autonomous.

These days, Hymowitz argues, too many of us are inclined to see children as rational, independent, self-motivated miniature adults who know better than their elders what they need and want. Adults, meanwhile, define themselves as children’s allies, partners and friends, whose role is to “empower children, advocate for them, boost their self-esteem, respect their rights and provide them with information with which they can make their own decisions.”

The proponents of such thinking are, in Hymowitz’s view, many and varied, beginning with the experts who advance the fashionable notion of babies as learning machines, so efficiently pre-programmed to lay down neural pathways that parents can seem expendable to the process – except insofar as they supply brain-building Mozart and black-and-white “infant development toys.” Then there are the educational theorists who cheerlead for “child-centered” learning, in which teachers are demoted to “co-learners” or “managers of instruction.” And there are the conservatives who want to overturn the entire system of juvenile justice and try 11-year-olds as adults. The list goes on: marketers who have ensured that many American children make brand decisions by the age of 4, advertisers who have transformed the 8-to-12-year-old population into a lucrative market known as “tweens,” television executives who have lured the previously untapped 2-and-under set to the tube with candy-colored shows like “Teletubbies.”

The demographic side of this story – overworked two-career couples, children and adolescents more isolated from adult company than they once were – is by now familiar. But

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<sup>52</sup> The best example of this was the Pokemon phenomenon. CNN reported on October 14, 1999: “I will be a Pokemon master!” That’s the battle cry of a character in the Japanese cartoon/GameBoy/trading-card franchise that has powered past Beanie Babies to become the top kid collectable and compulsion of the moment. Along with their own TV show and hand-held electronic game, these pocket monsters now are featured on some Volkswagens and jumbo jets with a movie set for a November 12 release and candy due in stores any day now. They are portrayed as lovable mutants that evolve and fight. You catch them, you train them, and in return they gobble up Mom and Dad’s disposable income. A huge hit in Japan, the little monsters crossed the Pacific and rang up \$1 billion in product sales in the United States in just a year. Lochridge worries that Pokemon’s creators and marketers deliberately set out to create a fantasy world so compelling that children would quickly become obsessed. “What seems to be happening is that the kids are brainwashed,” he said. “They cannot think about anything else, they cannot do their school work. They talk all day long about (Pokemon). They are trading cards surreptitiously, I think. And so I think it has kind of taken over their minds, in a sense.” Many teachers have come to agree, and as a result, schools all over the United States are beginning to ban Pokemon. “As far as I know, since the last 10 years that I have been principal, I haven’t had to put a ban on a specific toy,” said Principal Alice Strouder “But this one, we had to.” In time, the pocket monsters likely will be gone and forgotten like Power Rangers and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. But right now, they’re thriving with a new GameBoy cartridge coming out this month.

Hymowitz never bothers to acknowledge that theories and doctrines aren't transported whole into homes or schools.<sup>53</sup>

Judith Warner, NYT November 27, 2005, *Kids Gone Wild*: "Children should be seen and not heard" may be due for a comeback. After decades of indulgence, American society seems to have reached some kind of tipping point, as far as tolerance for wild and woolly kid behavior is concerned. Last month, an Associated Press-Ipsos poll found that nearly 70 percent of Americans said they believed that people are ruder now than they were 20 or 30 years ago, and that children are among the worst offenders. ... In 2002, only 9 percent of adults were able to say that the children they saw in public were "respectful toward adults," according to surveys done then by Public Agenda, a nonpartisan and nonprofit public opinion research group. In 2004, more than one in three teachers told Public Agenda pollsters they had seriously considered leaving their profession or knew a colleague who had left because of "intolerable" student behavior. But what seems to have changed recently, according to childrearing experts, is parental behavior - particularly among the most status-conscious and ambitious - along with the kinds of behavior parents expect from their kids. The pressure to do well is up. The demand to do good is down, way down, particularly if it's the kind of do-gooding that doesn't show up on a college application. Once upon a time, parenting was largely about training children to take their proper place in their community, which, in large measure, meant learning to play by the rules and cooperate, said Alvin Rosenfeld, a child psychiatrist and co-author, with Nicole Wise, of "The OverScheduled Child: Avoiding the Hyperparenting Trap." "There was a time when there was a certain code of conduct by which you viewed the character of a person," he said, "and you needed that code of conduct to have your place in the community." Rude behavior, particularly toward adults, was something for which children had to be chastised, even punished. That has also now changed, said Dan Kindlon, a Harvard University child psychologist and author of "Too Much of a Good Thing: Raising Children of Character in an Indulgent Age." Most parents, Dr. Kindlon said, would like their children to be polite, considerate and well behaved. But they're too tired, worn down by work and personally needy to take up the task of teaching them proper behavior at home. "We use kids like Prozac," he said. "People don't necessarily feel great about their spouse or their job but the kids are the bright spot in their day. They don't want to muck up that one moment by getting yelled at. They don't want to hurt. They don't want to feel bad. They want to get satisfaction from their kids. They're so precious to us - maybe more than to any generation previously. What gets thrown out the window is limits. It's a lot easier to pick their towel up off the floor than to get them away from the PlayStation to do it." Parenting today is also largely about training children to compete - in school and on the soccer field - and the kinds of attributes they need to be competitive are precisely those that help break down society's civility. Parents who want their children to succeed more than anything, Dr. Kindlon said, teach them to value and prioritize achievement above all else - including other people. "We're insane about achievement," he said. "Schoolwork is up 50 percent since 1981, and we're so obsessed with our kids getting into the right school, getting the right grades, we let a lot of things slide. Kids don't do chores at home anymore because there isn't time." And other adults, even those who should have authority, are afraid to get involved. "Nobody feels entitled to discipline other people's kids anymore," Dr. Kindlon said. "They don't feel they have the right if they see a kid doing something wrong to step in." Educators feel helpless, too: Nearly 8 in 10 teachers, according to the 2004 Public Agenda report, said their students were quick to remind them that they had rights or that their parents could sue if they were too harshly disciplined. More than half said they ended up being soft on discipline "because they

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<sup>53</sup> Adapted from N.Y. Times book review, Nov. 14 1999, by Margaret Talbot.

can't count on parents or schools to support them." And that, Dr. Rosenfeld said, strikes at the heart of the problem. "Parents are out of control," he said. "We always want to blame the kids, but if there's something wrong with their incivility, it's the way their parents model for them." There's also the chance, said Wendy Mogel, a clinical psychologist whose 2001 book The Blessing of a Skinned Knee has earned her a cult following, that when children are rude, obnoxious and outrageously behaved, they're trying to tell parents something - something they've got to shout in order for them to hear. "These kids are so extremely stressed from the academic load they're carrying and how cloistered they are and how they have to live under the watchful eye of their parents," Dr. Mogel said. "They have no kid space." Paradoxically, she said, parental over-involvement in their children's lives today often hides a very basic kind of indifference to their children's real need, simply to be kids. "There are all these blurry boundaries," she said. "They need to do fifth-grade-level math in third grade and have every pleasure and indulgence of adulthood in childhood and they act like kids and we get mad."

## x- *Capitalism – The Great American Dream*

The remarkable resilience of capitalism as it has spread over five centuries, and spread around the globe had certainly been part of the central story of modern history. Capitalism has been promoted by, and has promoted in turn, the Protestant work ethic, empire, usury, the advent of department stores and the rise of consumer culture. Merchant capitalism may have existed in the Middle East as early as the 9<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>54</sup>.

Capitalism has produced for its adherents unparalleled prosperity. Together with technological achievements, capitalism has produced a society where most citizens can enjoy not only security from hunger and homelessness, but in the main, jobs which are less and less physically intensive.<sup>55</sup>

There have been many critiques of capitalism. Karl Marx's "*Verdinglichung*," - his "making of an idea into a thing" – was one of the most sophisticated. Marx held that the market economy alienated subjects, or people, into objects, while transmuting objects, as if in modern alchemy, into subjects with "meanings," or, speaking contemporarily, brand identities (to feel differently about different brands of the same product speaks to the workings of reification).

A more obvious critique of capitalism has been that it is brutal on those who don't succeed. Recognizing this, European countries introduced high taxation in order to provide a high level of benefits for those in need. Europe's post-war recovery seemed to prove the sustainability of this model, though it was challenged in the economic downturn of 2008. Both Democrats and Republicans agree that the government is required to some degree to regulate the economy and make it more benign for those who do not make it. Nevertheless, all agree that the market, to a large part, has its own logic which, left mainly to itself, produces the greatest wealth for the most amount of people<sup>56</sup>. It is the combination of freedom, individualism, and encouragement to experiment, innovate and succeed that combine with capitalism to produce American wealth.<sup>57</sup> Extremists like Ayn Rand felt that the

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<sup>54</sup> Historians of the Middle East have established that a vibrant merchant capitalism thrived from as early as the 9th century, incorporating features such as double-entry book-keeping, a refined division of labour, the development of partnerships, advanced banking systems, long distance trade (and the technological innovations which afforded and flowed from such enterprise), and an evasion of guilt associated with usury, which were generally thought to have emerged and cohered in the modern west. That some of these characteristics of Arab-Islamic society may have begun to decline from the 12th century is immaterial, for not only had they emerged far earlier than occidental historians had assumed, but they also of course migrated to Europe through the eastern Mediterranean, Italian ports and, most especially, Iberia.

<sup>55</sup> For it is capitalism which has driven the increasingly high-tech, knowledge-based industry of the global economy.

<sup>56</sup> The old distinction between Democrats and Republicans was that the former believed in government intervention in the economy whereas the latter regarded such interference as ultimately worse for the people. Although some legacy of these polarized positions remains today, the distinction is one of emphasis rather than principle. Democrats would go for slightly higher taxes and slight increases in government programs. Republicans mutter about the evils of big government and big taxes, but some of the greatest spending increases occurred under Republican Presidents, such as President Reagan.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas L. Friedman wrote the following article that appeared in the Reader's Digest adapted from "The Lexus and the Olive Tree," This Is America's Moment:

A country with a diverse, multicultural, multilingual population ... bound together by one language – English ...  
... Venture capitalism ... considered a noble and daring art, so that anyone with a reasonable (or even ridiculous) invention in his garage could find capital to back it.  
The world's most honest legal and regulatory environment, one with relatively little corruption, plenty of legal safeguards for any foreigner who wants to make an investment and take out his profits, and laws that encourage innovation through patent protections.

more selfish and greedy any individual was, the more money he tried to earn, the better that was going to ultimately be for everyone.<sup>58</sup> But even the well-accepted views of Adam Smith

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A country with bankruptcy laws that encourage people who fail in a business venture to try again. In Silicon Valley bankruptcy is viewed as a necessary and inevitable cost of innovation, and this attitude encourages people to take chances.

A country in which anyone coming to its shores is treated as constitutionally equal to anyone else, thus enabling that country to attract the best brains in the world to its companies, medical centers and universities. Roughly one-third of Silicon Valley's scientists and engineers today are immigrants.

Has anyone out there tried to become a Japanese citizen lately? How about a Swiss? You pretty much have to be born a Japanese, or born a Swiss.

A country where workers can easily move from one economic region to another. In America, lose your job in Maine one day and, if one is available, you can get a new one in San Diego the next.

A country that is tolerant of the oddball, the guy with the ponytail or the gal with the ring in her nose who is also a mathematical genius or software whiz. America is a country where the minute one person stands up and says, "That's impossible," someone else walks in the door and announces, "We just did it."

A country that allows the investor or innovator to hold on to a large share of capital gains, so there is a constant incentive to get enormously rich.

A place that values the free flow of information because countries comfortable with such openness, and the cacophony and chaos that sometimes attend it, will have a real advantage. America's Freedom of Information Act, which barely allows the government to keep secrets for long, has nurtured this culture of openness from its foundation.

America is a unique superpower. It excels in the traditional sources of power – army, aircraft and weapons – and at the same time it excels in all the new measures of power in the era of globalization.

<sup>58</sup> Over the past twenty years, there have been significant changes in the face of American capitalism. These trends are pushing Americans towards greater selfishness and individualism. On the one hand there is an increased emphasis to seeing oneself and others in purely monetary terms. But, to counteract this, there has been a counter-trend to try to gain some personal meaning from the work place by separating one's identity from the giant corporation. Many keep their own hours, dress as they please and seem to lack the obvious corporate attachments. Many are not full-time employees of big companies, just free agents.

Secondly, many American employees have become stock owners. In 1974, 200,000 workers had equity in their companies. In 1999, 10 million held company stock. In companies whose share price keeps on rising this does create more worker loyalty. But in many companies the employee, rather than think, I need to stay here and do my best because I have an investment in this company, think, I am going to keep a close eye on this ship, in case it starts to sink and my options become worthless. It is no accident that the world's capital of stock options, Silicon Valley, is also the world's capital of job-hopping.

Thirdly, there is a new skepticism toward the company's argument that it serves some purpose higher than itself. One consequence of the last twenty years has been the dissolving of partnerships and the forming of public companies instead. As a result, at all levels of the company the quest for partnerships was replaced by the quest for huge year-end bonuses. The question that the newly tightly strung Wall Street worker asked himself at the start of each year was no longer "What do I do this year to further my career at my company?" It was "How do I maximize my take for the year?"

Another casualty of the boom has been all forms of work-related prestige other than sheer moneymaking. A good example is the university president. Once a plausible stepping stone to perhaps even the White House, the job was coveted for all sorts of non-monetary reasons. Now it is widely regarded as something of a dumping ground for the bureaucratically minded. Benno Schmidt's 1992 decision to quit as president of Yale to enter the private sector would have been unthinkable a decade earlier. When, last month, the president of Brown quit to take a job for a lot more money, as chancellor of Vanderbilt, he reinforced the idea that Ivy League prestige no longer trumped pay. The decay of a lot of old-fashioned status means that a lot of very important people are doing things that not very long ago they would have thought beneath them. When President Clinton leaves office few will be shocked if he takes a job with Lazard Freres or DreamWorks. That in itself is shocking.

In addition, there is a new spirit of nonconformity as part of the corporate culture itself. In the free-agent economy anything that smells of conformity is out of fashion. Every corporate boss now understands that he's supposed to turn his employees into whirling dervishes of innovation. People now need to believe that their work is actually an endless quest for originality.

In the corporate culture of old, when things went bad there was at least a pretense that the company bore some responsibility for the worker's fate. Now that pretense has nearly vanished. Guess what that means? You're on your own.

On the one hand, this means fulfillment of the age-old dream of freedom and independence. The free agent lacks a certain accountability and sense of responsibility. They can decide when they want to work and when they don't want to work. In the digital age, the reasoning goes, megacorporations will be displaced by something called virtual corporations – teams of "free agents" who work together for the duration of a project, and no longer. But free agents have to forgo all the benefits of dental plans, expense accounts, life insurance, 401(k) plans and sick leave. This too has been hyped as a macho thing to do. Today's heroes take risks – they're entrepreneurs and I.P.O. millionaires. "Be your own boss!" exhorts an advertisement for Guru.com, another Web site for free

claimed that it was people's selfish interests which, when pooled, produced a rational marketplace which benefited society as a whole.<sup>59</sup>

In *Capitalism and Commerce*, Edward Younkens lays out the moral argument for capitalism comprised of natural rights, negative freedoms, free markets, and a narrowly limited government. These elements of the capitalist system, he contends, are good not only for the wallet, but also for the soul. "Capitalism," he writes, "not only generates enormous wealth but also creates an environment in which morality and virtue can flourish."

The morality that Younkens sees flourishing is an ethic of individual responsibility and accountable free choices. Markets reward the prudent virtues, and wealth affords us leisure, which allows us to get beyond the base necessities and think of higher things. Younkens makes a strong case for free markets and free trade, for the corporation, and even for business as a noble calling.

But even Younkens agrees that immorality and vice can just as well flourish in the same environment. Younkens defends an unknown ideal: the businessman who turns down government subsidies on principle, or the corporate board that sees the defense of natural rights as its highest purpose. He does not explain just how the market will create such people.

The answer is that the market alone will not create them. Illiberal economic systems are indeed great barriers to decent moral living. For free markets alone are not the source of virtue. They must be accompanied by a larger culture that encourages morality and virtue to flourish. And occasionally there are ways in which totally unfettered capitalism can impair such a culture. Human beings do not always jump to perfect themselves and their world just because they are given their freedom. Corporate misbehavior ala Enron, WorldCom and others is eloquent testimony to this. (Based on Yuval Levine, in National Review August 22, 2002, *The Moral Case for Capitalism, A much-needed defense.*)

The heroes of the past may have been soldiers and statesmen, artists and writers; today they are entrepreneurs<sup>60</sup>. Even countries like China, India and Brazil, that once scoffed at the crass commercialism of the West, now search desperately for ways to create export zones and high tech corridors.<sup>61</sup>

#### a- Globalization

Fareed Zakaria, Newsweek, Dec. 99, (Special Edition):

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agents. "Work where you want, when you want. No supervisors. No commuting hassles. Earn \$\$\$ thousands. Freedom to balance your priorities and work in your pajamas."

"Sure working for yourself is scary," warns Aquent's Web site. "Life is an adventure and then you die. Live now!" (Based on several articles in the NY Times Magazine, March, 2000).

<sup>59</sup> Wealth Happens, By Mark Buchanan, Harvard Business Review April 2002

... The Scotsman Adam Smith ... of the eighteenth century. In his *Wealth of Nations* ... "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our necessities but of their advantages.

... In this way, the full spectrum of society's needs will be met through pursuit of individual self-interest. Such a free-market economy should work smoothly and efficiently without any global management, as if guided and organized by Smith's famous invisible hand.

<sup>60</sup> economic agents are not only greedy but also perfectly rational.

<sup>60</sup> Below (under **Heroes**), we discuss whom the heroes of individual citizens generally are. Here we are referring to the understanding of to whom the legacy of building up America belongs. Histories of early America all emphasize the political (and to a lesser degree the military) leaders of that time. Whereas today there is a sense that it is the Bill Gates' and Jack Welch of the world who really make it happen more than the Bushes and the Clintons. Some have claimed that after September, 11, the political elite has once again achieved a certain prominence, but it is too early to know whether this will be a long-term trend.

<sup>61</sup> Fareed Zakaria, *Newsweek*, Dec. 99, (Special Edition).

Thousands of goods, services and even ideas are manufactured globally, creating complex interconnections between states. A book, for example, can be written in New York, copy-edited in India, typeset in the Caribbean, printed in Singapore, and then shipped worldwide. The internet has made global manufacturing, distribution and communication simple and cheap.

## **b- The Great American Dream**

Hand in hand with this idea that capitalism can produce seemingly limitless wealth, is the Great American Dream.

This is an idea unique to America – the idea that everyone who comes to its shores and works hard and honestly will make it in a material sense<sup>62</sup>. Stories describing ‘keepers of the dream’, new immigrants who arrived with nothing but who, through their entrepreneurial skill, hard work and sacrifice, became wealthy, are constantly being written up. The unusual robustness of the American economy, even in times of global recession<sup>63</sup>, seems to miraculously confirm that this is the place where dreams of wealth continuously come true.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> July 25, 2002, *Bret Stephen's Eyes Abroad: In Praise of Mediocrity*, Bret Stephens: In his first annual message to Congress, Abraham Lincoln made the essential point: "There is not," he said, "of necessity, any such thing as the free hired laborer being fixed to that condition for life.... The prudent, penniless beginner in the world, labors for himself; then labors on his own account another while, and at length hires another new beginner to help him. This is the just, and generous, and prosperous system, which opens the way to all - gives hope to all, and consequent energy, and progress, and improvement of condition to all." Lincoln was speaking at a time when America was a predominantly agricultural society, when sheer sweat still counted for a lot. And yet the message contains the basic premise of American-style capitalism: that, much more than smarts, hard work, prudence, initiative and independence ultimately are what determine success and failure in America. Even today, that remains largely true.

<sup>63</sup> For about 30 years now, the dollar has been getting stronger, overall, against other currencies. This has often been pronounced during times of global recession, when people have less confidence in other currencies, even if the USA was leading the recession.

<sup>64</sup> Mortimer B. Zuckerman wrote the following article in the U.S. News & World Report, July 17, 2000, *A Time To Celebrate*:

"The happy union of these states is a wonder; their constitution a miracle: their example the hope of Liberty throughout the world." So wrote James Madison in 1829 and so it has proved. One nation under God dedicated to freedom, justice, and equality of opportunity. This is our heritage.

The goal of Americans new and old is to participate in the American dream. You don't hear much about the French dream, or the British dream, or the Russian dream. It is the American dream that is the magnet to millions all over the world. It is a dream built on individual effort – talent, ambition, risk-taking, readiness to change, and just plain hard work – qualities that count more in America than social background or luck. We celebrate individualism over conformity, entrepreneurialism over bureaucracy, pragmatism over ideology and innovation over tradition. We nourish our mavericks, cherish our young, welcome newcomers, and encourage the rise of talent.

Unencumbered by a feudal past, we are more egalitarian, more meritocratic, and more individualistic than any other country in the world. Americans look to what they can do for themselves and others, not what the government may do for them. It is the liberation of individual energies that has enabled America to flourish despite so many predictions that the experiment was bound to fail. How could so many races, colors, and creeds work and live together in a spirit of mutual tolerance? Our forefathers were prescient in providing a framework of order, a bill of rights, and a separation of powers. Power in our Constitution resides with the people, who delegate it to the government, rather than the other way around.

All but the very poor live better than all but the very rich of a century ago. Anybody who wishes to work has the opportunity to move from the bottom of the ladder to a middle-class standard of life, or even higher. A majority of the poorest 20 percent of the population in 1975 made it to the top three-fifths of the income distribution by the 1990's, i.e., to middle class or better, with almost 3 out of 10 making it to the top quintile.

Christopher H. Schmitt, *Industriousness; A Nation on the Make*: U.S. News & World Report, June 28 / July 5, 2004: ...immigrants took... a virgin continent, and, in the historical equivalent of a morning's work, created the world's wealthiest economy, one that now clocks in at \$11.5 trillion annually...we became a nation of hustlers. But we were hustlers in (mostly) the good sense: people willing to work exceptionally hard in an effort to escape poverty, own our own land, pursue a trade or a craft, and toil untroubled by the fetters of monopoly. A strong streak of Protestantism provided a fierce drive and a firm conviction in the righteousness of the cause. ...working to earn money – went from being dishonorable to respected, even celebrated... "If you go back to Aristotle,

An important part of the dream idea, is the concept that creativity and innovation is encouraged and rewarded with great wealth<sup>65</sup> (see **Individualism, creativity and innovation** above).

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people who made money were held in contempt,... Tocquenville... "I know of no country, indeed, where the love of money has taken stronger hold on the affections of men," he wrote. "The love of wealth is therefore to be traced, as either a principal or an accessory motive, at the bottom of all that the Americans do."...Calvin Coolidge famously declared that "the chief business of the American people is business,"...France and Germany ... actively work to hold business in check. Both, for example, have officially limited the length of the workweek to 35 hours. By contrast, the standard American workweek is 40 hours...

<sup>65</sup> Secular Humanism has removed the idea of reward in the World to Come. It is now able to point to rewards in this world for those who 'deserve' it. See **Secular Humanism** below.

## *xi- Protection, litigation and victimization*

The state, through both legislation and the courts, is supposed to protect all the above. Because the society is a rights-based society, people who have their rights infringed on are considered victims and are entitled to redress. The courts have tried to place a monetary, material value on human dimensions that ordinarily cannot be reduced to material dimensions. This has led to enormous sums spent on malpractice and other suits. It has led to placing a monetary value even on human life itself (murder, as in the case of the O.J. Simpson civil case) and has led to a litigation mentality, where people look to make money off anything inappropriate their neighbor might have done to them.

Americans believe in the right to be compensated for any injury or pain and to be protected from all risk or danger. Amongst many, Americans have come to think they have a right to sue someone when anything bad happens.

Such rights were not generally recognized as recently as the early 1960s, when courts, operating under traditional common law, typically set standards of reasonable care and did not automatically send cases to juries.

Today, when anything can go to a jury, we respond with bureaucratic rules that hamper the exercise of authority. Teachers cannot discipline disruptive pupils; their parents might sue. Doctors and nurses cannot provide optimum medical care, lest they be second-guessed by a jury. Government employees cannot use common sense to solve problems, lest they violate bureaucratic regulations or union rules.

Jungle gyms and seesaws have been removed from most playgrounds. So has the bare earth beneath them: One federal safety handbook advises, "Earth surface such as soils and hard-packed dirt are not recommended because they have poor shock-absorbing properties." We must eliminate risk, prevent all possibility of injury or pain. Not because we are more concerned about others – but because we are more concerned about protecting ourselves.

All of this is a legacy of the 1960s. The civil rights movement got Americans into the habit of regarding anyone with a complaint as a righteous victim. The failure of the government to win the Vietnam and antipoverty wars got Americans into the habit of distrusting all institutions and authority.<sup>66</sup>

Another manifestation of this is the proliferation of special interest groups, such as women, gays, disabled, Indians and many others, all of whom claim to be discriminated against (victim status) and therefore subject to special treatment in many different contexts including college admission, treatment in the press, employment, social and other services.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Based on an article by Michael Barone, U.S. News & World Report March 25, 2002.

<sup>67</sup> Deaf to good sense, by John Leo, U.S. News and World report, March 25, 2002:

A deaf Long Island couple refuse to let their 6-year-old daughter get a cochlear implant. The father has lamented about the future: "If the technology progresses, maybe it's true deaf people will become extinct, and my heart will be broken."

This is a poignant moment. The parents know that if they approve the implant, they will lose their daughter to a wider world they can never enter (and don't want to enter). The daughter would go to a hearing school and have hearing friends, to the probable exclusion of her family. But the plain fact is that the parents are preventing a cure for deafness for ideological reasons. An upside-down logic is at work here: Helping a girl to hear is an attack on her and on her culture ... As columnist Cathy Young writes in *Reason* magazine, this is an example of how "the celebration of difference and pluralism has brought modern Western culture to the brink of lunacy."

In his book *The Mask of Benevolence*, Northeastern University psychologist Harlan Lane lays out the argument that American deaf people have been oppressed and "colonized" like third world countries taken over by European powers ... Universities are starting to compete for disabled professors ... The size-acceptance movement uses the same logic as the disabilities movement ... Words such as "overweight" and "fit" are often

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put in quotation marks to isolate them as terms used by intolerant outsiders who want to impose their own standards and the idea that stoutness is a problem.

## *xii- Secular Humanism/reason/Western intellectuals*

Secular Humanism is really the broad umbrella under which all the above factors are subsumed. It is humanism – i.e., the concern for the well-being of all of mankind but without religion, i.e., it is based on the idea that man alone can come up with the right system of ethical living<sup>68</sup>.

Secular Humanism depends on two premises:

- i- That man is basically good and desires to do good for others.
- ii- That his reason alone will allow him to come up with the right moral code to express this goodness.<sup>69</sup>

But history has shown that being more intelligent, or even being a master of knowledge, does not make one a better person.<sup>70</sup> As Rav Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz put it, a donkey who

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<sup>68</sup> This does not mean that the secular humanist will not use religious values. For example, the idea that there are universal human rights is based on the premise that man was created in the image of G-d. But it is man who decides when to use a religious value and when to reject it. Religion is reduced to the role of being just another source, albeit a rich source, for the values which man has put together (see **Religion** below).

<sup>69</sup> Secular Humanism is the faith man has in his own mind. It is the faith we have in science; the rise of the social sciences, all of that being evidence of the faith we have in ourselves, in our ability to know ourselves, gain control of things (within and outside ourselves) through such knowledge.  
Mark I. Pinsky, *Do you believe in Mickey Mouse?* International Herald Tribune – Friday, November 12, 2004: The Walt Disney Co. has been teaching young children about faith and values in its full-length, animated feature films for nearly seven decades... Good is rewarded and evil punished. Faith is an essential element – faith in yourself and, even more, faith in something greater than yourself, some nonspecific higher power. That is, faith in faith.... Disney presents all of this in a context that vaguely implies Western Christianity. Yet this is a largely secular scripture, a gospel almost wholly without God. This reluctance to make organized religion a significant part of the fabric of film mirrored Walt Disney's early commercial concerns: fear of offending and fear of excluding audiences in the United States and abroad. It also reflected Walt's unhappy experience of growing up with a rigidly fundamentalist father who soured him for life on organized religion. Thus the Disney empire, by its founder's designation, is a kingdom of magic, almost totally without reference to any kingdom of heaven. ... A 1954 Time magazine cover story on Walt Disney described him as "the poet of the new American humanism." ... Ironically, Walt's "godless theology" is conveyed through a manifestly theological vocabulary: words such as faith, believe, miracle, blessing, sacrifice and divine. ...

<sup>70</sup> Charles Murray: ... Ludwig van Beethoven: As a contributor to human accomplishment in the arts, Beethoven is unsurpassed, but what a destructive example he set. For the most part, great artists before Beethoven had behaved like normal human beings, some better, some worse. True, Michelangelo had been a handful, and the great artists were more likely than ordinary people to be colorful characters with large egos. But they also had vocations, in two senses. First, they had a demanding craft they were obliged to master. Second, they were trying to realize aesthetic excellence in their art. The notion that they were expressing themselves would have seemed odd to most of them — self-expression was a byproduct of their work, perhaps, but secondary to the obligations they saw themselves as fulfilling. As a practitioner, Beethoven shared those characteristics. His mastery of tonal harmony and the musical forms of the classical era was absolute. His sense of mission to realize an ideal of musical beauty is explicit in his own writings. But he also played The Genius to the limit, especially in his later years. He was rude, obstinate and self-absorbed, and railed against the slightest interference. Beethoven behaved as if he were God's gift to humanity. As the 19th century changed to the 20th, the imperative to express the self increasingly displaced the traditional mission of realizing the highest standards of aesthetic excellence. Transcendental conceptions of truth and beauty, embodied nowhere more supremely than in Beethoven's music, were abandoned in favor of conceptions of sensitivity, authenticity and the artist's obligation to challenge the audience. Thus the paradox: Beethoven the devoted craftsman created products so profoundly resonant with the human spirit that they will find an audience for as long as the species exists. Beethoven The Genius contributed to a frame of mind that impedes today's artists from doing the same thing.

July 25, 2002, *Bret Stephens's Eyes Abroad: In Praise of Mediocrity*, Bret Stephens: ... political success in America is an area where intellectual brilliance counts for relatively little. Roman Hruska may have been an intellectual mediocrity, but he was a four-term senator with a significant record of legislative success. Gerald Ford was famously unbrilliant, but his decency carried him far and did the country good. Ditto for Franklin Roosevelt (a second-rate intellect, a first-rate temperament, as Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. so famously put it), Ronald Reagan, and, perhaps, the office's current occupant. By contrast, America's most brilliant presidents - from Herbert Hoover the wonder boy to Jimmy Carter the nuclear engineer - have notoriously been America's worst.... The greatness of the United States lies in the fact that, over time, it has tended to place a higher value on ordinary decency than

knows many languages is still a donkey. This was clearly shown by Paul Johnson in his book, Intellectuals. In fact, many of the great intellectuals of the last 400 years led morally reprehensible lives.<sup>71</sup> These include great philosophers like Jean Jacques Rousseau, authors and thinkers of every kind. The same is true of great scientists and inventors of our age. Although certain scientists like Einstein showed a special sensitivity to the moral well-being of mankind, just as many scientists were unusually insensitive, or were very poorly developed in their own moral stature and character. The extreme example of this was the Nazi doctors who conducted, in the name of science, the most horrible experiments on their patients. Similarly, Soviet doctors administered medicines on political prisoners assigned to psychiatric hospitals designed to inflict pain, immobilization, and other illegitimate ends.<sup>72</sup>

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on extraordinary cleverness. The Soviet Union, after all, richly rewarded its greatest talents, as does Europe today. By contrast, America has thrived because it created an environment in which intellectual mediocrities could also prosper, in which their limited capacities for intellectual development would not stand in the way of their ambition so long as they were willing to play by the rules and cultivate the right habits of mind and heart.

In his commencement speech at Yale last year, President George W. Bush offered graduates the following wisdom: "To those of you who received honors, awards and distinctions, I say, well done. And to the C students - I say, you, too, can be president of the United States."

<sup>71</sup> Jay Tolson, *All Thoughts Out?*, U.S. News & World Report March 11, 2002: *Public Intellectuals* - The ideal of the intellectual was associated with a commitment to universal truths rising above economic, ethnic, or political interests. But from the beginning, intellectuals found it hard to live up to the ideal. Surveying the European scene in the 1927 book, The Betrayal of the Intellectuals, the writer Julien Benda already saw treason everywhere. If at first the betrayals were sporadic, they soon became more the rule than the exception. "As continental Europe gave birth to two great tyrannical systems in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, communism and fascism", writes Mark Lilla in The Reckless Mind: Intellectuals in Politics, "it also gave birth to a new social type, for which we need a new name: the "philotyrranical intellectual." ...Lilla writes ... "Far from being independent minds, they are", he adds, "a herd driven by their inner demons and thirsty for the approval of a fickle public."

Eli Shaltiel wrote the following article in Ha'aretz, January 26, 2001, *Grand Disillusionment*: Bertrand Russell married 5 times. Russell was an acclaimed public figure ... especially after World War II, and people all over the world were curious to hear what he had to say. ...Plain nonsense that Russell published in the course of his lifetime...Russell produced over 2,000 words a day ...He wrote...and had no qualms about contradicting what he had written the day before with such seeming passion and conviction. The contradiction between Russell's preaching to the public and the way he lived his own life; between his ideas on bringing up children and the discovery that he neglected his own offspring and treated them cruelly; between his call for total equality between marriage partners and the petty tyrant he turned out to be in dealing with his own wives, trampling everything they cherished. His public life was also marred by fundamental contradictions. The great prophet of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation was not the least perturbed when nuclear weapons were liable to fall into the hands of Cuba's Fidel Castro...

Prof. Diamond, a professor of physiology at the U.C.L.A. School of Medicine, argues that only two scientists in the last 200 years can justifiably be called irreplaceable: Freud and Darwin. (Natural History magazine, Feb. 2001) Both were multifaceted geniuses with many talents in common. Both were great observers, attuned to perceiving in familiar phenomena a significance that had escaped almost everyone else. Searching with insatiable curiosity for underlying explanations, both did far more than discover new facts or solve circumscribed problems, such as the structure of DNA: they synthesized knowledge from a wide range of fields and created new conceptual frameworks, large parts of which are still accepted today. Both were prolific writers and forceful communicators who eventually converted many or most of their contemporaries to their positions. Freud's contributions came at a time when interest in mental illness and its classification was growing but its etiology was virtually unknown and treatments were mostly ineffective — in part because clinicians and researchers were still focused on conscious, cognitive processes. Freud's status is unique because he recognized an entirely different mental realm, and many of his concepts — pioneering and radical in their time — are so familiar today that they have entered the daily vocabulary of the general public. . . .Yet Freud was outstandingly ungenerous: he denied credit to others, was intolerant of rivals, hated many people, and surrounded himself with unquestioningly loyal admirers.

<sup>72</sup> In fact, modern science is replete with examples showing at best poor character. In his 1999 book *Killer Algae*, Alexandre Meinesz describes the bitter struggle which developed among French biologists over how to deal with the algae that had by then covered the entire Mediterranean littoral. Beginning with internal spats and graffiti attacks, it became a battle in the courts. Research institutes sued television stations, and in other suits scientists charged one another and their publishers with defamation.

Another example is the inventor of the transistor and Nobel prize winner, Shockley, voted by Time Magazine as one of the greatest people of the 20th Century.<sup>73</sup> One of his employees described it thus: Working for Shockley proved to be a particular challenge. He extended his competitive nature even to his working relationships with the young physicists he supervised. Beyond that, he developed traits that we came to view as paranoid.<sup>74</sup>

In 1963 Shockley left the electronics industry and accepted an appointment at Stanford. There he became interested in the origins of human intelligence. Although he had no formal training in genetics or psychology, he began to formulate a theory of what he called dysgenics.<sup>75</sup> He suggested that individuals with IQs below 100 be paid to undergo voluntary sterilization. He donated openly and repeatedly to a so-called Nobel sperm bank designed to pass on the genes of geniuses.<sup>76</sup>

When he died at age 79 of cancer, he regarded his work in genetics as more important than any role he played in creating the \$130 billion semiconductor industry.

But perhaps you are tempted to think that such people are still credited with producing great and profound ideas that have benefited the world. The truth is, however, that many of these ideas led to huge catastrophes of unimaginable scope. Underlying the great evils of Nazism and Communism, for example, were ideologies, human thoughts or better ideals of how the perfect society looks.<sup>77</sup> But look at how many intellectuals were taken in by these ideas.

In his *Modern Times*, Paul Johnson writes the following of Communism: Churchill said that, in Moscow in August 1942, Stalin told him coolly that ‘ten millions’ of peasants had been ‘dealt with.’ (pg. 271) .... The whole party became an organization of torturers and oppressors. ...The party acquired a new species of moral unity, and embarked on a course from which there was no turning back. Exactly the same thing was to happen to the German National Socialists a few years later: it was Stalin who pointed the way to Hitler. ... (pg. 272) Western intellectuals ... scientists accustomed to evaluating evidence and writers whose sole function was to study and criticize society, accepted the crudest Stalinist propaganda at face value. They needed to believe; they wanted to be duped. .... Sydney and Beatrice Webb said of [the building of the White Sea Canal, later so harrowingly described by Alexander Solzhenitsyn]: ‘It is pleasant to think that the warmest appreciation was officially expressed of success of the OGPU, not merely in performing a great engineering feat, but in achieving triumph in human regeneration.’ Harold Laski praised Soviet prisons for enabling convicts to ‘lead a full and self-respecting life’; Ann Louise Strong recorded: ‘The labor camps have won

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<sup>73</sup> In 1956 Shockley, Bardeen and Brattain shared a Nobel Prize in Physics – an unusual awarding of the Nobel for the invention of a useful article.

<sup>74</sup> “He suspected that members of his staff were purposely trying to undermine the project and prohibited them from access to some of the work. He viewed several trivial events as malicious and assigned blame. He felt it necessary to check new results with his previous colleagues at Bell Labs, and he generally made it difficult for us to work together.”

“In what was probably the final straw, he decided the entire laboratory staff should undergo polygraph tests to determine who was responsible for a minor injury experienced by one of the office workers. While the group was making real progress in developing the technology needed to produce silicon transistors, Shockley’s management style proved an increasing burden.”

<sup>75</sup> Using data from the U.S. Army’s crude pre-induction IQ tests, he concluded that African-Americans were inherently less intelligent than Caucasians – an analysis that stirred wide controversy among laymen and experts in the field alike.

Nonetheless, Shockley pursued his inflammatory ideas in a series of articles and speeches. Regularly interrupted by boos and catcalls, he argued that remedial educational programs were a waste of time.

<sup>76</sup> He filed a \$1.25 million libel suit against the Atlanta Constitution, which had compared his ideas to Nazi genetic experiments; the jury awarded him \$1 in damages. He ran for the U.S. Senate on the dysgenics platform and came in eighth.

<sup>77</sup> *Reflections on a Ravaged Century* by Robert Conquest

a high reputation throughout the Soviet Union as places where tens of thousands of men have been reclaimed.’ So well-known and effective is the Soviet system of remaking human beings’, she added, ‘that criminals occasionally now apply to be admitted.’ Whereas in Britain, wrote George Bernard Shaw, a man enters a prison a human being and emerges a criminal type, in Russia, he entered ‘as a criminal type and would come out an ordinary man but for the difficulty of inducing him to come out at all. As far as I could make out they could stay as long as they liked.’ (pg. 275)

The famine of 1932, the worst in Russian history, was virtually unreported. At the height of it, visiting biologist Julian Huxley found ‘a level of physique and general health rather above that to be seen in England.’ Shaw threw his food supplies out of the train window just before crossing the Russian frontier ‘convinced there were no shortages in Russia’. ‘Where do you see any food shortage?’ he asked, glancing around the foreigner’s only restaurant in the Moscow Metropole. He wrote, ‘Stalin has delivered the goods to an extent that seemed impossible ten years ago, and I take my hat off to him accordingly.’ But Shaw and his traveling companion, Lady Astor, knew of the political prisoners, since the latter asked clemency on behalf of a woman who wished to join her husband in America (Stalin promptly ordered her handed over to the OGPU) and she asked him, ‘How long are you going to go on killing people?’ When he replied, ‘As long as necessary,’ she changed the subject and asked him to find a nursery maid for her children. (pg. 276)

H.G. Wells said [of Stalin that] he has ‘never met a man more candid, fair and honest. ... no-one is afraid of him and everyone trusts him.’ The Webbs argued that he had less power than an American president and was merely acting on the orders of the Central Committee and the Presidium. Hewlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury, described him as leading ‘his people down new and unfamiliar avenues of democracy.’ The American Ambassador, Joseph E. Davis, reported him as having ‘insisted on the liberalization of the constitution’ and ‘projecting actual secret and universal suffrage.’ ‘His brown eye is exceedingly wise and gentle,’ he wrote. ‘A child would like to sit on his lap and a dog would sidle up to him.’ Emile Ludwig, the famous popular biographer, found him a man ‘to whose care I would readily confide the education of my children.’ The physicist J. D. Bernal paid tribute both to ‘his deeply scientific approach to all problems’ and to his ‘capacity for feeling.’ He was, said the Chilean writer, ‘a good-natured man of principle’; ‘a man of kind geniality,’ echoed the Dean. ...

Self-delusion was obviously the single biggest factor in the presentation of an unsuccessful despotism as a Utopia in the making. But there was also the conscious deception by men and women who, at the time, honestly believed they were serving a higher purpose by systematic misrepresentation and lying. (pgs. 276-7)

The amazing thing is that we got into this abyss of destruction and degradation through two centuries of progress and reason. The eighteenth century, Conquest<sup>78</sup> states, was the century of Reason, the nineteenth century that of Science. The two together gave us the delusion that our knowledge of human society is so complete that human affairs are in principle fully understandable and fully manipulable: In fact, the French intelligentsia thought that everything could now be determined by Reason. It was in the name of reason that the French Revolution was made. Reason it was that justified the complete destruction of the existing order, and its replacement by abstract concepts – these latter formulated by, and dictatorially enforced by, theorists with no experience of real politics. The Revolution Idea then spread over half the world. The problem now was the idea that reason justified force and the delusion that force could solve all problems, that it only needed well-intentioned people in

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<sup>78</sup> *Reflections on a Ravaged Century*, Robert Conquest

power to solve everything by mere decree. Of course there are always men who are revolutionaries by temperament, to whom in fact bloodshed is natural. Once they had been told by the best intellectuals of the day that they had a mandate to destroy “enemies of the people,” there was no problem with implementation. Even intellectuals who are not strictly speaking revolutionaries, but who claim to speak in the interests of “humanity” as a whole, have taken sinister stands. For example, Bertrand Russell is quoted as accepting “that if it could be shown that humanity would live happily ever after if the Jews were exterminated, there could be no good reason not to proceed with their extermination” (Frederic Raphael, Prospect, May 1996).

The revolutionary believed it to be in the nature of things that dictatorship and terror are needed if the good of humanity is to be served, just as the Aztec priests believed themselves to be entirely justified in ripping the hearts out of thousands of victims, since had they not done so, the sun would have gone out, a far worse catastrophe for mankind. In either case, the means are acceptable, being inevitable that is, if the theory is correct. The primitive search for certainty, of mental submission to revelation, of submergence of the individual mind into a supposed mass mind. It is an easy step from there to justifying falsehood as well. Thus in the Soviet Union there was what amounted to an acceptance of the old Russian distinction between transcendent Truth (pravda) and mere factual truth (istina). It was Pushkin, again, who wrote sardonically, “The lie that uplifts us is dearer to me than the mass of petty istinas.”

At the height of its destruction of millions of lives, Stalinism achieved a remarkable prestige among many Western intellectuals. They were somehow attracted to men of ideas, who had profoundly considered the laws of history, and who were now creating a new society through necessary merciless action.

Commenting on this phenomena of the intellectual to get caught up in such great evil, the great historian Norman Cohn has remarked:

There exists a subterranean world, where pathological fantasies disguised as ideas are churned out by crooks and half-educated fanatics for the benefit of the ignorant and superstitious. There are times when that underworld emerges from the depths and suddenly fascinates, captures, and dominates multitudes of usually sane and responsible people ... And it occasionally happens that this subterranean world becomes a political power and changes the course of history.<sup>79</sup>

Dostoevsky writes of a human type “whom any strong idea strikes all of a sudden and annihilates his will, sometimes forever.” The true Idea addict is usually something roughly describable as an “intellectual.” The British writer A. Alvarez has (and meaning it favorably) defined an intellectual as one who is “excited by ideas.” Intelligence alone is thus far from being a defense against the plague. Students, in particular, have traditionally been a reservoir of infection. The Nazis won the German students before they won the German state, and there are many similar examples. We are told of hostesses in Berlin in the early 1930’s to whom National Socialism gave “meaning to their empty lives.”

What happens to most people is that they do not use their intellect to vigorously analyze all opinions in an attempt to discover the most true amongst them. Rather, their choice is made by their temperament. Intellect is used as a way to rationalize positions which people choose to hold for reasons other than truth. Marx himself would have been the last to say that any of his followers were the intellectual superiors of Darwin or Clerk Maxwell; nor is it likely that a Communist in this century would have claimed that Molotov was the intellectual superior of Ivan Pavlov or Anton Chekhov, or Louis Aragon, or Louis de Broglie, or Albert Camus.

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<sup>79</sup> *Warrant for Genocide* by Norman Cohn

In the end, philosophers, like the rest us, are moved and motivated by temperament:

Temperament is not conventionally recognized reason; so he argues impersonal reasons for his conclusions. Yet his temperament really gives him a stronger bias than any of his more strictly objective premises ... Wanting a universe that suits it, he believes any representation of the universe that does suit it.<sup>80</sup>

Pavel Akselrod, one of the leaders of the Russian revolutionary Marxists in the struggle against Eduard Bernstein and “revisionism,” remarked (privately, to be sure) that “the whole thing is a matter of temperament,” adding that the real objection to peaceful revolution, whatever its advantages, is that it “would be exceedingly boring” – once again that dreadful prospect. Similarly, Simone de Beauvoir, in a revealing passage in *The Prime of Life*, wrote that she and Sartre were “temperamentally opposed to the idea of reform.”

When the Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm on “The Late Show,” 24 October 1994 (see TLS, 28 October 1994) was asked by Michael Ignatieff to justify his long membership of the Communist Party, he replied: “You didn’t have the option. You see, either there was going to be a future or there wasn’t going to be a future and this was the only thing that offered an acceptable future.”

Ignatieff then asked: “In 1934, millions of people were dying in the Soviet experiment. If you had known that, would it have made a difference to you at that time? To your commitment? To being a Communist?” Hobsbawm answered: “This is a sort of academic question to which an answer is simply not possible. Erm ... I don’t actually know that it has any bearing on the history that I have written. If I were to give you a retrospective answer which is not the answer of a historian, I would have said, ‘Probably not.’”

Ignatieff asked: “Why?”

Hobsbawm explained: “Because in a period in which, as you might say, mass murder and mass suffering are absolutely universal, the chance of a new world being born in great suffering would still have been worth backing. Now the point is, looking back as an historian, I would say that the sacrifices made by the Russian people were probably only marginally worthwhile. The sacrifices were enormous, they were excessive by almost any standard and excessively great. But I’m looking back at it now and I’m saying that because it turns out that the Soviet Union was not the beginning of the world revolution. Had it been, I’m not sure.”

Ignatieff then said: “What that comes down to is saying that had the radiant tomorrow actually been created, the loss of fifteen, twenty million people might have been justified?”

Hobsbawm immediately said: “Yes.”

It will be seen that, first, Hobsbawm accepted the Soviet project not merely on the emotional ground of “hope” but on the transcendental one of its being the “only” hope. Then, that he was justified because, although it turned out wrong, it might have turned out right (and it was not only a matter of deaths, but also of mass torture, falsification, slave labor). Finally, that he believed this style of chiliastic, absolutist approach to reality is valid in principle.

Believers are often very well informed, with a mass of detail not readily available to their critics, though in fact either distorted or meaningless.

One answer to this is to abandon the idea of absolute truth altogether. General ideas, general concepts, general principles, interpreted as absolutes rather than approximations, are mere kindling wood for a new conflagration. But of course we must use general ideas and general

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<sup>80</sup> William James

concepts. General words are necessary and natural – as long as those who use them understand that they must be our servants, and not our masters. We must learn from experience, yet not believe we can see far into the future. We must take short views, but not too short. We must allow the state a role in social affairs, but not a dominance. We must grant the legitimate claims of nationality, but reject its extreme manifestations. This non-dogmatic type of approach has been among the essentials of the civic and pluralist culture.

There is no formula that can give us infallible answers to political, social, economic, ecological and other human problems.

We still find, especially in parts of academia, the idea that everything is a struggle for power, or hegemony, or oppression; and that all competition is a zero-sum game. This is no more than repetition of Lenin's destructive doctrine. Intellectually, it is reductionism; politically, it is fanaticism. Then again, much policy-determining "research" is based on supposedly indisputable statistical data, which economists at least are now beginning to abandon but which are widely used in other contexts – the *nombre fixe* being almost as hard to uproot as the *idée fixe*.

It was basically common sense that kept the mass of the people in Britain and America less liable than the intelligentsia to delusion about the Stalinists. As Orwell said, they were at once too sane and too stupid to accept the sophisticated in place of the obvious. But common sense by itself has its vices, or inadequacies. First, it can go with parochialism. Chamberlain was not alone in failing to understand that Hitler was capable of acts incredible to his Birmingham City Council or other "plain, shrewd Britons." Similarly, this philistine "shrewdness" inclines to the view that there is "something to be said on both sides" in international disputes. (In the Nazi case, the Germans of the Sudetenland had a legitimate wish to join Germany.) And then, common sense can decline into muddleheaded-ness if it is not well integrated.

We find such concepts, or banners, as "feminism" and "environmentalism" where long-standing and broadly accepted attitudes take on – or often take on – a good deal of the intensity and lack of proportion of ideologies proper, and some of the viral qualities of an Idea. Nor should we perhaps forget the strange usage "activism," almost always a favorable word, though the Nazis (for example) were at least as "active" as their betters – indeed deserving of the label "hyperactivist."

Acceptance of Freudian and other more or less deterministic psychological theories was also an example of the attractions of a pseudoscience, with enough intellectual complexity and a mission in human life. The result was a culture of, or tendency toward, *tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner* – and, in conjunction with social determinism, of distorting the legitimate claims of social order. J. A. C. Brown remarks at the end of his book *Freud and the Post-Freudians*, "The explanation of the irrational is a special task of the twentieth century."

The normal human being is motivated both by a desire to improve his own lot and a desire to conform to certain social or moral principles; and in normal life there is mutual adjustment of these urges, sometimes in makeshift fashion.

*Within Reason Rationality and Human Behavior* by Donald B. Calne Knopf:

Reason ... has improved how we do things; it has not changed why we do things. Reason has generated knowledge enabling us to fly around the world in less than two days. Yet we still travel for the same purposes that drove our ancient ancestors – commerce, conquest, religion, romance, curiosity, or escape from overcrowding, poverty, and persecution.

To deny that reason has a role in setting our goals seems, at first, rather odd. A personal decision to go on a diet or take more exercise appears to be based upon reason. The same might be said for a government decision to raise taxes or sign a trade treaty. But reason is only contributing to the “how” portion of these decisions; the more fundamental “why” element, for all of these examples, is driven by instinctive self-preservation, emotional needs, and cultural attitudes. ...

Curiously, we have often found it easy to use reason in a harmful way. Chekhov’s prophetic words, written a century ago, have a contemporary ring: “Man has been endowed with reason, with the power to create, so that he can add to what he’s been given. But up to now he hasn’t been a creator, only a destroyer. Forests keep disappearing, rivers dry up, wildlife’s become extinct, the climate’s ruined, and the land grows poorer and uglier every day.”

We proclaim that the disastrous events of the two world wars will not be repeated, but the same forces that led to those tragedies persist today, barely beneath the surface. Contemporary examples are, unfortunately, abundant: the death of 30 million Chinese as a result of political mismanagement committed under the ironic slogan of “The Great Leap Forward,” the killing fields in Cambodia, the slaughter of Kurds in Iraq, the “ethnic cleansing” in Bosnia, and the tribal massacres in Rwanda. The list is long and continues to grow.

The evidence compels the conclusion that in spite of our capacity for reason, we remain tied to the motivation provided by our biological drives and cultural attitudes. In these circumstances I argue a humanist position informed, even guided, by recognition of the limits of reason. To place reason in perspective, we should take it down from the pedestal upon which expectations of supremacy have placed it. When we do this, we find that in many ways reason is like language, for both are highly complex instruments developed for biological purposes. They help us to achieve what we want, without having any real impact on why we decide what we want. Both operate unobtrusively; we take both for granted.

... In the past, reason has been given the status of an independent, external and ultimate authority, with the ability to confer wisdom and goodness. Like a deity, reason was conceived as all-powerful. The ascent of reason began when the ancient Greeks surveyed the universe and attempted to sort out the confusion of ideas that had accumulated over previously known history. The Greeks were not the first to pay attention to reason, but they used it more extensively than anyone had before, raising rational discourse to an exalted status. Sophocles caught the spirit of his times in a single line: “Reason is God’s crowning gift to man.” Aristotle echoed this view a century later: “For man, therefore, the life according to reason is best and most pleasant, since reason more than anything else is man.” In Rome, Cicero proclaimed that “reason is the ruler and queen of all things.” Similar views were forming in India, and in China, Confucius was on the same track.

This early optimism proved to be transient. After a few centuries of achievement, the first age of reason went into a prolonged decline in Europe. Knowledge became a product generated from *a priori* principles; it was divorced from observation, but it carried the authority of unquestionable certainty. Intellectual innovation in the West slowed down for over fifteen hundred years, although in the East, reason was burgeoning. The Islamic world made notable advances in mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and architecture. Akbar the Great, Moghul emperor of India from 1560 to 1605, declared, “The superiority of man rests on the jewel of reason.”

Commerce and the Reformation weakened the traditional power of the church and the monarchies in Europe, and the great minds of the Renaissance broke through the mental barriers imposed over the Middle Ages.

Once released in Europe, reason leapt forward. It drove science, art, and literature; during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the surge of intellectual innovation and critical inquiry gave a distinctive name to the epoch, the Enlightenment. The tone was set by the “stern pursuit of accurate knowledge based on evidence, logic, and probability in preference to the colorful confusion of myth and legend that had satisfied a less critical age.” In science, reason demanded linkage between observation and theory, and this gave a new order to the world. In the words of Isaac Newton: “Science consists in discovering the frame and operations of Nature, and reducing them, as far as may be, to general rules and laws – establishing these rules by observations and experiments, and thence deducing the causes and effects of things.” Experiments were designed to test hypotheses; if the hypotheses could not be disproved, they were incorporated into the growing body of knowledge and applied – to engineering, architecture, medicine, and back into science. Émile Borel depicted the excitement of a people testing a tool of immense power: “The real inspiration of this splendid epic, the conquest of the world by man, is the faith in human reason, the conviction that the world is not ruled by blind gods or laws of chance, but by rational laws.”

Startling advances in understanding how the physical world worked were accompanied by social upheavals. In political philosophy, Baruch Spinoza asserted that the purpose of the state was “to lead men to live by, and to exercise, a free reason; that they may not waste their strength in hatred, anger and guile, nor act unfairly toward one another.” New political ideas erupted to produce reforms that rocked the foundations of traditional dynasties. Monarchies were replaced by democracies and the Industrial Revolution fueled the turmoil. The face of European society was transformed. As a result of these changes, faith in reason reached its zenith toward the end of the nineteenth century. For the Victorians, anything was possible. Time and again reason “worked,” so for many it became a new god, possessed of great powers and intrinsic virtue. The most direct expression of reason was science, which seemed invincible. Science and reason together would rid the world of poverty, disease, and ignorance; they would vanquish prejudice and superstition; they would lead to a coherent explanation for everything under – and beyond – the sun.

The hopes were not fulfilled. In the twentieth century, two devastating world wars, numerous small wars, and recurrent economic instability sapped confidence and optimism. The pendulum began to swing against reason and now the opposition is coalescing. The recoil from reason takes on the aspect of a surreal motion picture. The growing strength of cults, religious fundamentalism, and political extremism reflects this disenchantment. Unreason flourishes with the rise and increasing popular authority of clairvoyants, spiritualists, astrologers, faith healers, devotees of alternative medicine, and new age extraterrestrial communicators. These exponents of unreason are irrational because they reject, deny, or misinterpret relevant information that is available through observation. Widespread anti-intellectual forces denounce science as a regressive influence driving imperialism and militarism – even sexism and racism. A new and fashionable view holds that science is a subjective, culturally determined ideology with nothing “real” behind it. The letter of invitation to the Nobel Conference XXV, held in 1989, warns: “As we study our world today, there is an uneasy feeling that we have come to the end of science, that science, as a unified, universal, objective endeavor, is over.” The problem is not confined to science; there is a fragmentation of public support for all academic activity. Governments have lost interest in the university and its potential. The Chinese Cultural Revolution showed how easily political forces can exploit anti-intellectual sentiments into a massive popular movement capable of

destroying art, science, and medicine. The onslaught against reason in China was all the more alarming because it achieved such sweeping success in a nation whose historical roots are steeped in art, science, and medicine – whose people were pioneers of reason.

Why have so many turned against reason? There are several explanations, but among the foremost must be failure of the quixotic hopes vested in it. Reason was misrepresented as an all-powerful, divine force, with its own supreme mission. In fact, it has no aim and no inherent goodness. Reason is simply and solely a tool, without any legitimate claim to moral content. It is a biological product fashioned for us by the process of evolution, to help us survive in an inhospitable and unpredictable physical environment. It is also a tool to enable us to compete with other animals that are larger, faster, and stronger, with longer claws and more powerful jaws.

## **CHAPTER TWO: SOCIETY AND LIFESTYLE**

- i- Materialism**
- ii- Religion**
  - a- How religious is America?**
  - b- Separation of church and state: Government funding and school prayer**
  - c- The failure of secularism**
  - d- The problem of man-made religion**
  - e- The need for religious values in schools**
  - f- Non-traditional expressions of spirituality amongst American Jewry**
- iii- Lack of tradition and reverence**
- iv- Pace of life, consumerism**
- v- Education**
- vi- Marriage**
- vii- Sexual permissiveness**
- viii- Alternate life-styles/homosexuality**
- ix- Civic responsibility and heroism**
- x- Celebrities and heroes**
- xi- The media**
  - a- Bias and fabricated stories**
  - b- Non-factual reporting of biases**
  - c- Altering video images**
  - d- News blackouts**
- xii- TV and Hollywood**
  - a- Hollywood values and actors**
  - b- Truth**
  - c- The vastness of the movie industry**
  - d- Movies as a source of immoral lessons**
- xiii- Art, music and culture**
  - a- Art**
  - b- Theater**
  - c- Music**
- xiv- Sports**
- xv- Alcohol, drugs, violence and other trends**

## *i- Materialism*

### **Wealth means success**

Material prosperity is one of the few values that everyone agrees can be used to measure the success of a western country, and so too to measure the success of any individual in that society. Great wealth is equated with great success; poverty with a lack of success.<sup>81</sup>

The financial value of something very often becomes its primary value.<sup>82</sup> When Americans claim that their land is one of opportunity, that it beckons with its 'Great American Dream' they mean exclusively in financial terms. They do not consider that opportunity may be moral opportunity, the chance to develop your personality or to serve G-d. Hurricanes, work-stoppages, drugs – all are evaluated according to the financial losses involved.<sup>83</sup>

Increasingly, people's own evaluations of their worth as individuals is pegged to whether they have 'made it' financially or not.<sup>84</sup> The pressure to create wealth means that despite the enormous raises in the standard of living in American society, leisure-time has not increased over the last 30 years. People are continuously being socially conditioned to live at the upper margins of their economic class, such that a family earning \$120,000 p/a or more might still find themselves under great financial pressure.

*David Brooks, the NY Times Magazine June 2002:*

The average household in America now pulls in about \$42,000 a year. The average household headed by someone with a college degree makes \$71,400 a year. A professional degree pushes average household income to more than \$100,000. If you are, say, a member of one of those college-grad households with a family income of around \$75,000, you probably make more than 95 percent of the people on this planet. You are richer than 99.9 percent of the human beings who have ever lived....

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<sup>81</sup> The Jewish perspective on wealth is different, however: *Affluence, Work, Creativity: A Jewish Perspective*: 1) Judaism does not want people to be poor. Some of our greatest Sages were enormously wealthy. 2) However, having wealth is a greater challenge than being poor. 3) Some poor people are meant to have poverty as an essential part of what makes them grow; they will never be rich. 4) A wealthy person should know in advance under what conditions he/she would be willing to give up his/her wealth. 5) Above a certain minimum threshold, wealth has nothing to do with happiness. 6) 'Who is a wealthy person, he who is happy with his lot.' 7) Even the smallest of our possessions can be instruments of great growth. (Jacob went back for little utensils) 8) Inherited wealth reflects continuity of spiritual growth between one generation and the next. 9) National wealth can only be achieved in Israel-it is a direct function of the spiritual level of the nation.

<sup>82</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *American Notes*: A cab-driver volunteered to show me the glory of the town [Chicago] for so much an hour, and with him I wandered far.... I picked up another man, who was full of figures, and into my ears he poured them as occasion required or the big blank factories suggested. Here they turned out so many hundred thousand dollars' worth of such and such an article; there so many million other things; this house was worth so many million dollars; that one so many million, more or less. It was like listening to a child babbling of its hoard of shells. It was like watching a fool playing with buttons. But I was expected to do more than listen or watch. He demanded that I should admire; and the utmost that I could say was:--"Are these things so? Then I am very sorry for you."

<sup>83</sup> Erich Fromm has written extensively on this. See, for example, *The Sane Society*.

<sup>84</sup> The Jewish view on work and worth differs from this: *Affluence, Work, Creativity - A Jewish Perspective*: 1) The main reason we work is to make a living. 2) The greatest spiritual pursuits of mankind generally lie outside of the workplace. 3) Whether someone is the secretary or the director of a company is irrelevant to their value as human being. 4) Many of the most glorious professions are the least essential to a society. Many of the least appetizing are the most essential 5) The statements, 'Shoemaker dies' or 'a billion dollar tragedy' are intrinsically wrong. 6) 'Tzniut' is the Jewish concept which allows us to more accurately gauge human worth. 7) Many of the greatest events in Jewish history happened away from the public eye.

There are now around seven million households in the U.S. with a net worth of more than a million dollars. But the affluence of the upper class isn't even the amazing thing. It's the affluence of middle-class life. The average new American home has grown from 1,500 square feet to about 2,200 square feet in a single generation. The average American family spends more than \$2,000 a year on food from restaurants. There will soon be more cars in this country than people. Americans altogether spend \$40 billion a year on our lawns, an amount roughly equal to the entire federal tax revenue of India. ...With 6 percent of the world's population, the U.S. accounts for more than 30 percent of its total economic production.

Then you go over to one of those price club stores and you enter abundance on steroids. Here you can get laundry detergent in 40-pound tubs, 30-pound bags of frozen Tater Tots, frozen waffles in 60 serving boxes and packages with 1,500 Q-Tips. These stores have been constructed according to the modern American principle that there is no flaw in design and quality so grave that it can't be compensated for by mind-boggling quantity. The aisles here are wider than most country lanes. The shelves are packed from the linoleum floor clear up to the 30-foot fluorescently lighted ceiling with economy-size consumer goods.

Abundance really does seep into your soul. Even the people who are not blessed with big incomes are affected by it. One-sixth of the American population is part of the working poor, earning between \$17,000 and \$34,000 a year. Many of these people are just scraping by, shopping at Dollar General, very often without access to banks and health insurance, fearing the next layoff or illness. But still they breathe the air of plenitude. Some get seduced into consumption patterns they cannot afford and fall deeper and deeper into debt. ...And because there is so much income churning in the land of abundance, few families stay at the bottom or the top for very long. That means there is no sense of inherited hierarchy. There is no deference to one's supposed betters, and almost no sense that one should stay in "one's place." Every person, regardless of income, naturally considers himself superior to the rich jackasses with their McMansions. But the most obvious feature of the land of abundance is that people work feverishly hard and cram their lives insanely full. ...Life becomes a vectorial thrust toward perpetual gain and aspiration fulfillment. ... The proportion of professional and managerial workers who work more than 50 hours a week has risen by more than a third since 1985. And it's not just workaholism that marks contemporary life, it's hobby-aholism, activity-aholism and fun-aholism and friend-aholism, and pretty soon you've got 18 places to be on Saturday and color-coded schedules on the family refrigerator. The environment of abundance accounts for the energy, creativity and dynamism that marks national life. The lure of plenty, pervading the landscape, encourages risk and adventure. The more opportunity there is lying around, the more you'll risk to go for it and the less cost there is in going for it and failing. You just declare bankruptcy and move to the next valley.

Linda Kulman, *Materialism: Our Consuming Interest*<sup>85</sup>: ...personal consumption accounted for 70 percent of the nation's gross... Americans satisfy their wants by incurring debt, which now accounts for about 110 percent of personal disposable income. In 2000, nearly 1 in 5 families owned three cars or more... Americans shell out more for garbage bags than 90 of the world's 210 countries spend for everything. Indeed, America has double the number of shopping malls as it does high schools.

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<sup>85</sup> U.S. News & World Report, June 28/ July 5, 2004

...We have come to think that buying is an essential expression of freedom and individualism. As the old fast-food jingles went: "Gino's gives you freedom of choice," while Burger King lets you "have it your way."...

...It's not as if anybody is consciously trying to keep up with Bill Gates,... it trickles down one step at a time.... Real-estate values are tied to the quality of local education, so parents stretch on housing for fear that if they don't their kids will fall behind.

...with the coming of the Lacoste shirt in the 1930s and Ralph Lauren's Polo shirt in the 1970s, labels no longer hid discreetly inside the collar. ...Now, says Twitchell, to curb our acquisitiveness we would have to debrand: "It's a scarf; it's not an Hermes scarf. It's a car; it's not a Lexus. You put it around your neck or on your feet or you drive it. It's carrying more freight than it really needs to."

David Brooks<sup>86</sup>: Somehow we crossed a rubicon this year when you began to hear teenage girls talking about getting spa treatments. Not too long ago, spas were for helmet-haired ladies who lunch, who went for getaway vacations to escape from all that charity ball stress. But now spas are for everybody, and a 16-year-old Abercrombie & Fitch girl who makes \$7 an hour at the Cinnabon feels perfectly comfortable walking into a Japanese-minimalist spa and getting the full seaweed slather.

The market researchers at Yankelovich call this the Affluent Attitude. People with middle-class incomes now have the attitudes and expectations that were once reserved for the rich. If they buy a toaster, it had better be a Michael Graves designer toaster; if they go to the mall looking for a sweater, it had better be a Hilfiger or a Calvin Klein. And the sales staff had better be properly obsequious.

This isn't a triumph of higher incomes; it's a triumph of self-esteem. My favorite polling result of the 2000 election was a Time magazine survey that revealed that 19 percent of Americans believe that they have incomes in the top 1 percent, and a further 20 percent believe they will someday. A large majority of us regard ourselves as pretty far above average.

This may be why American consumers kept spending this year at an incredible pace, even as the economy slipped into the doldrums. In the flattering mirror of our imaginations, we see ourselves as high status, affluent people. So of course we are going to keep purchasing the finer things in life. And the beauty of it is that many of us will never have to face reality. We are born in the land of self-esteem, we travel the highways of exaggerated self-importance and we die in an atmosphere of smug self-satisfaction, happy with our lives and our things, leaving our descendants fond memories and large credit card bills.

#### *All Work and No Play:*

The European Union has just mandated a minimum of four weeks vacation for all member countries. The average American spends only 4.3 nights of vacation away from home, down from six nights about 25 years ago... More continental Europeans than Americans live in cramped flats, so they want to get out. Second, we have a much higher proportion of families

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<sup>86</sup> Senior editor of The Weekly Standard and author of Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There.

where both spouses work, so its not easy to organize private time for a king family vacation beyond much more than a week or two, and third, Americans are “broadly satisfied with their jobs,” a much higher proportion than in Europe. European labor unions push for more time off while American unions push for more money. The average American works nearly 2,000 hours a year. Germans? They put in about 1,500 hours a year – a difference of almost three months of 40-hour workweeks. About 40 percent of Americans put in 50-hour workweeks. We even work about three weeks more a year than the Japanese.

Psychology Today, *Man's Best Friend?Materialism as a Substitute for Happiness*: Lacey Beckmann, November 2001: The idea that we compensate for insecurity or low self-esteem with our checkbook is so widely accepted that it's a cultural cliché: Why else would we consider a middle-aged man in a Ferrari to be a mid-life crisis on wheels? Now there is empirical evidence of the link between self-doubt and materialism. Robert Arkin, Ph.D., of Ohio State University, found that undergraduate students who identified themselves as chronic self-doubters were far more likely to agree with statements such as "I like to own things that impress people," and "The things I own say a lot about how well I'm doing in life." A second study found that increasing a sense of self-doubt heightened the materialistic tendencies of subjects already prone to insecurity. "Self-doubt is very unpleasant, so people cope by investing themselves in something. Materialism is one such investment," says Arkin. The results, published in *Psychology and Marketing*, also link materialism to a sense of anomie or uncertainty about one's place in society (as opposed to doubt about one's own abilities or identity). In both cases, the Ferrari is a poor buffer: Arkin points out that psychological tests repeatedly link a materialistic worldview to lower levels of life satisfaction.

### **Meaning more important than wealth**

Despite the tremendous emphasis on accumulating wealth and the conspicuous consumerism that goes with it, most Americans yearn for something more meaningful in their lives.<sup>87</sup> (See **Chapter Three – iii. Meaning of Life** below).

Even in the workplace itself other, more meaningful factors often dominate. Time and time again we see that, when it comes down to it, people would rather have meaningful existences than more money or other material things. One clear example of this was at the beginning of

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<sup>87</sup> Robert J. Samuelson wrote the following article in Newsweek, May 15, 2000, *The Limits of Materialism*: The number of millionaires in the United States and Canada has risen almost 40 percent since 1997 to 2.5 million. As for ordinary Americans, they view the country's greatest problems as moral. In a 1999 survey, people listed four top concerns as: crime, wrongdoing by elected officials, drug abuse and family breakdown. Economist Robert Fogel [points out that when rapid economic progress collides with moral values it produces a spiritual crisis and a religious awakening.] ... Fogel identifies four such religious "awakenings" – a beginning in roughly 1730, 1800, 1890 and 1960. ... All but the poorest of the poor live better today than all but the richest of the rich a century ago. In 1890, only the top 10 percent of Americans had incomes exceeding today's poverty line. Leisure has exploded, because people live longer – and retire – and job demands have shrunk. In 1880, workers labored an average of 11 hours a day, six days a week. But rising materialism doesn't guarantee personal fulfillment or cure social ills. The greatest social inequalities today, Fogel asserts, are more spiritual than economic. What qualities some people have in excess, others lack entirely. These include self-discipline, a sense of purpose and a feeling of community. But these qualities cannot be acquired in the market or easily transferred by government programs. They are instilled mainly by family. America's Fourth Awakening began, Fogel says, when the religious right began emphasizing moral concerns. Though the religious right's political power may be waning, many of its ideas have migrated to the mainstream. Just last week President Clinton crowed over social statistics showing that teens who eat with their parents are "far more likely to avoid smoking, drinking, violence, suicide and drugs" than those who don't. The observation seemed unremarkable. This was hardly true a decade ago when Vice President Quayle was ridiculed for doubting (in his "Murphy Brown" speech) that single-parenthood was culturally praiseworthy.

the millennium when Madison, Wisconsin reported 1.2% unemployment, with many more openings than that. In order to keep their staff, and to attract desperately needed new employees, companies began to offer perk after perk. Employees were being offered stock options, palm pilots, cell phones and a \$1,000 bonus to help with the down payment on their first homes. Two years ago, Berbee took everybody in the company and their families to Disney World. Bagels and muffins are free on Fridays, the sodas in the office machine are free all the time (consumption went up 400 percent after that change), and if employees want to use the office copiers for personal use, no problem. An auto-repair service comes to the employee parking lot every other Wednesday to do oil changes and tire rotations. There's dry-cleaning delivery four days a week and pizza at least once a month (which for some reason employees still have to pay for).

One company offered free maid service for new employees. Burger chains are beginning to offer health benefits to grill workers. Carlson Company, which makes cosmetic counters, built a \$750,000 day care center so staff members can visit their kids at story time.

With all these openings, workers should be hopping from job to job, taking advantage of all the perks and lures, boosting their income to the max. Yet a survey done by the QTI Group, the largest local staffing agency, found that the job-turnover rate has been dropping even as the unemployment rate has plunged. No one's jumping at the opportunities and salaries are rising nowhere near as fast as you'd expect in such tight labor conditions.

When interviewed, people in Madison claimed that they would prefer not to jump around. They would prefer to work at places that are familiar, or where some member of their family already works, rather than get higher salaries and more perks. And they would prefer to stay consistently at one job, enjoy stability and develop their reputation, rather than jump when they are offered something better. The meaning and the context of their jobs count more than their pay checks. It is true that Wisconsin is the Midwest, less consumer-orientated and more conservative than other parts of the States; but there is reason to believe that there are certain universals of human nature involved here too (based on an article in *The New York Times*, March, 2000).

Psychology Today, *Beyond Materialism*: A funny thing happened to psychologist Susan Krause Whitbourne. She thought she was researching how personality changes over the course of adulthood. But when she looked at the results of her longitudinal study, she was staring straight at the philosophical malaise of modern Americans. What she found was that since the mid-1960s, when she started her study, Americans have lost a sense of personal meaning. They're working more - but far more full of despair. In all three cohorts of adults she has added, tested, and retested over 22 years, every measure of psychosocial development improved with age. Except one. In her most recent round of testing, she was surprised to see a "precipitous decline" in ego integrity, a personality factor relating to wholeness, honesty, and meaning in life and to having a sense of connection with others. At first she thought it was restricted to the yuppie generation of her study - people with a "notoriously empty lifestyle focused on wealth and possessions," she reports in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (Vol. 63, No. 2). But when it turned up in all three groups at the same time, she could only conclude it reflects "a more general society-wide crisis of morality and purpose affecting adults of all ages." A professor of psychology at the University of Massachusetts, Whitbourne began testing personality variables at the University of Rochester in 1966. Students scored low on industry; they lacked "a focus on work and material success." Like others of their era, they were disenchanted with the work ethic. Over time, and with exposure to the real world, their personal industry began to climb. By 1988, when yet another cohort

joined the study, the three groups were equally slaving away. But ego integrity had plummeted. All three groups were now questioning life's worth. What happened between 1977 and 1988? "People got caught up in chasing the materialistic dream. They got recognition for their achievements yet don't feel that what they are doing matters in the larger scheme of things." The scores on life satisfaction were so low, Whitbourne says, they couldn't go any lower. She thinks people are now looking for ways to put more meaning in life. There are no data. "My belief," she confides, "is based on hope."

*New York Times Poll, April 2000:*

Do you think the amount of money your parents had, influenced who you turned out to be, or don't you think so?

- |           |     |
|-----------|-----|
| 1. Yes    | 39% |
| 2. No     | 59% |
| 9. NS/Ref | 2%  |

Do you think the amount of money you make will influence who your children turn out to be, or don't you think so? (37a. Do you think the amount of money you made influenced who your children turned out to be, or don't you think so?)

- |           |     |
|-----------|-----|
| 1. Yes    | 41% |
| 2. No     | 56% |
| 9. NS/Ref | 3%  |

Which do you think shows more of who you really are: Your role at work, or your role at home?

- |                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| 1. Work                | 17% |
| 2. Home                | 75% |
| 3. Does not work (VOL) | 8%  |
| 9. NS/Ref              |     |

Do you measure your professional success primarily in terms of how much money you make, or not?

- |           |     |
|-----------|-----|
| 1. Yes    | 19% |
| 2. No     | 79% |
| 9. NS/Ref | 2%  |

Would you keep your present job if your salary were cut 25 percent, or not?

- |           |     |
|-----------|-----|
| 1. Yes    | 31% |
| 2. No     | 55% |
| 9. NS/Ref | 14% |

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The growing income gap in America between those at the top and those at the bottom is morally wrong.

- |             |     |
|-------------|-----|
| 1. Agree    | 49% |
| 2. Disagree | 43% |
| 9. NS/Ref   | 9%  |

In measuring your success in life, do you place more importance on money than you normally admit to, or not?

- |        |     |
|--------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 34% |
| 2. No  | 65% |

9. NS/Ref 1%

Are you more likely to get bad feelings such as sadness, anger or loneliness – on weekdays or on weekends?

- 1. Weekdays 38%
- 2. Weekends 23%
- 3. Both equally (VOL ONLY) 15%
- 9. NS/Ref 24%

What is the biggest stress in your life (READ/ROTATE 1-5):

- 1. Your love life? 8%
- 2. Your family? 18%
- 3. Job and career pressures? 22%
- 4. Time pressures? 19%
- 5. Money? 22%
- 9. NS/Ref 10%

**Giving more important than having**

Richard Taylor wrote the following article in *Philosophy Now*, August/September 2000, *The Singer Revolution*:

Singer claims that those who attain this American dream are, very often, the “moral equivalent” of murderers!

Suppose you were to find your barn engulfed in flames. Your expensive car is in there, but also, you discover, in another part of the barn are some children, unknown to you, who have no business being there. There is no time to save both. Do you get your car out and let the children perish, or do you rescue the children instead?

Anyone with the least moral sense would save the children, even at considerable personal loss. To do otherwise would, in effect, make one a murderer.

But are we not all, who live in comfort beyond our needs in and affluent society, in a similar situation? There are children in the world who face death from sickness or hunger and we could, almost effortlessly, save some of them simply by contributing to relief organizations.<sup>88</sup> We choose, however, to let the children die rather than trim our extravagances.

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<sup>88</sup> March 24, 2002, *To Be Young and Homeless*, Jennifer Egan: In an era regarded as generally prosperous, the numbers are staggering: between 900,000 and 1.4 million children in America are homeless for a time in a given year. Most of them are homeless only once, and for months, not years. And while the impact of homelessness on these children is difficult to distinguish from the many other hardships of poverty, there is evidence that homeless children have more health problems, more hospitalizations and more developmental problems than poor children who have never been homeless. Homeless children are more likely to wind up separated from their parents for periods, either with other relatives or in foster care. Children who experience homelessness are also more likely to become homeless as adults...while there is diversity among homeless families and the chains of events that lead them to seek public shelter, there is also a shared context: in 1970, there were approximately 300,000 more of what are called extremely-low-income housing units in America than families who needed them; now there are 4.5 million more extremely-low-income families in need of housing than there are units in their range of affordability. Many factors have contributed to this reversal: in the decades since 1970, rent prices in urban areas have outstripped inflation while wages in low-end jobs have at best remained flat. A lot of poor urban neighborhoods have been gentrified as city life once again became attractive to the affluent. And a large influx of immigrants beginning in the 1980's has created an enormous demand for inexpensive apartments in the biggest cities.  
In New York, where income disparity between the rich and poor is nearly twice the national rate, the housing problem is especially acute. Between the late 70's and the late 90's, the incomes of the poorest fifth of New Yorkers fell by 33 percent in real terms, while in the 1990's alone, the city lost more than 500,000 apartments renting for less than \$500 a month (in part through the relaxation of rent-control regulations) -- more than half the

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total low-rent units available. This placed a particular burden on poor families: in 1999, more than 25 percent of New Yorkers who rented an apartment spent more than half their incomes doing so. For a family stretched so thin, a single disaster to a parent -- becoming sick or injured or losing a job; splitting up with a spouse or partner; developing a drug or alcohol or gambling problem -- can result in a child being suddenly without a home. In a middle-class family, such personal blows tend to be cushioned by savings. Poor families without savings look to the government for help. But whereas all poor families able to qualify are entitled to Medicaid, there is no entitlement to housing in America. As for rent subsidies: in the late 1970's, the federal government provided 300,000 new units of rental assistance each year, most of them in the form of Section 8 vouchers or certificates, which can be used by poor families toward rent payments in privately owned apartments. By the 1990's, the number of additional new vouchers had fallen to 40,000 a year, and for two years beginning in 1995, the federal government eliminated the creation of new vouchers entirely. The proposed Bush budget allows for 34,000 new vouchers, to be added to the approximately 1.8 million already in use. But this increase will not put even a small dent in the problem. In New York City alone, the waiting list for Section 8 is more than 200,000 long... As for welfare housing allowances, they are pitiful. A family of three in New York can receive a maximum of \$286 a month for shelter allowance -- try renting an apartment for that. And during the 1990's, the city's once-robust investments in building and developing low-income housing were slashed by about 50 percent. Poor people struggling to pay the rent will struggle much harder to find new housing, should they lose what they have. And when they can't, they drop with their children into the homeless system. The federal government now spends \$1.7 billion each year on homeless services, but that's only a fraction of the total spent nationally; some 40,000 programs exist to deal with homelessness in America, many financed at the state and local levels.

## ii- Religion

America had always been a religious country<sup>89</sup>, something which continued in some form in the last half of the century. In the Eisenhower era, Congress opened a prayer room in the Capitol, made "In God We Trust" the official national motto and required its inclusion on all currency, and added 'under God' to the Pledge of Allegiance.

But secularists scored victories, too. In its 1962 decision in *Engel v. Vitale*, the Supreme Court ruled that public schools could not sponsor specific prayers in the classroom. The next year, the court barred state-sponsored Bible readings in schools.

In the midst of the social upheavals of the 1960s, *Time* magazine set off quite a stir when it asked, in a cover story, "Is God Dead?" But America, the country that placed the words "In G-d we trust" on its coins<sup>90</sup> was still filled by a significant majority of people who defined themselves as religious.<sup>91</sup> There was an increasing open religiosity of presidential candidates, a process to become more pronounced in the 21C.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Benjamin Franklin, in a 1782 pamphlet, wrote: "Atheism is unknown there; infidelity rare and secret; so that persons may live to a great age in that country, without having their piety shocked by meeting with either an Atheist or an Infidel." The two least religious founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin would have been considered quite religious compared to today's secularists. Jefferson signed letters "in the year of Our Lord Christ."

During the 70 years after the Revolution, America became an avidly evangelical nation. The fight over slavery pitted abolitionist Christians against pro-slavery Christians, each citing Scripture to support their positions. In his greatest speeches, Abraham Lincoln acknowledged God's providence and sought God's support of the Union. To many Americans, the Cold War struggle against a militantly atheist ideology required fortification of America's own religiosity.

<sup>90</sup> The Pledge of Allegiance of the U.S.A. reads: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic, for which it stands, one nation, under G-d, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. The Declaration of Independence also mentions G-d (twice in the first two paragraphs).

<sup>91</sup> U.S. News & World Report, October 23, 2000, *Divining the God Factor*: Although 85 percent of Americans say they are Christians, more than three decades of shifting immigration patterns has helped Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu communities take root, making the United States the most religiously diverse country in the world.

<sup>92</sup> The acceptability of religion in politics, especially by a President, was one of several decades. John F. Kennedy sought to reassure voters in 1960 that his Roman Catholicism would not dictate his policies as president. Jimmy Carter was America's first evangelical president. His frankness about faith helped boost him from obscurity. (But as his presidency wore on, complaints rose about his "holier than thou" attitude.)

Both leading candidates of the first post-millennium presidential race Republican George Bush and ... Al Gore [have publicly] listed the defining moments in their spiritual lives. For Gore it was attending revivals as a child, becoming born again at Harvard, his adult baptism. And prayer, he says, has gotten him through the bumpier stretches of the campaign. "I just don't know how I would react to the challenges that have made me stronger without my faith," Gore said in an interview.

The younger George Bush, a Methodist, read daily from The One Year Bible; he prayed with ministers on his cell phone; he asked staff, "Did you go to church on Sunday?" Bush touted compassionate conservatism (especially his idea that government should fund faith-based charities), applying evangelical principles to politics.

Gore's running mate, Senator Joseph I. Lieberman urged a greater role for religion in public life in his campaign speeches.

The Christian Coalition emerge as a longer-term political force of religious conservatives.

In "The Diminishing Divide: Religion's Changing Role in American Politics" (Brookings Institution, 2000), reports showed that whereas a narrow majority of Americans in 1968 wanted churches to stay out of

The 1990's saw a substantial increase in the proportion of Americans with no religious preference, mostly because of a shift in demographics, not a rise in religious skepticism. Young adults frequently disengage from religion when leaving the parental home but re-engage after forming a family, but as a result of the recent trend toward marrying later in life, for many that re-engagement hasn't happened yet. The percentage of adults raised with no religion rose from 3 to 6 percent over the past 30 years, but only about one third of those without religious preference can be counted as nonbelievers<sup>93</sup>.

Certainly, religion remained stronger in the USA than in any other first-world nation, but so were moves to separate religion from the state. Religion aroused passion, on either side of the divide, where indifference in Europe reigned.<sup>94</sup> For example, abortion remained a tremendous national topic in the States, whereas in England it was insignificant<sup>95</sup>. Although the Church of England had an opinion on the matter, most people couldn't tell you what it was. Similarly with school prayer. England still had an established church (and does to this day), and the laws requiring that daily act of worship are still on the books, though widely flouted. A devout school principal can hold a service every morning if he feels like it, though few seem to bother any more. But, in the States, there was a continuous national debate on this topic. Americans tend to debate fundamental issue of meaning: "How shall we live?" and "Why must we die?". This gave a depth and gravity to national political discourse that in other countries is mainly lacking.

As for Europe, the problem of secularism was not so much that there were so many people who did not believe in G-d. The problem was that even religion had become secularized. The famous Danish philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard described the Dane (and by extension European), who may go to church on Sunday for an hour or so, but who, for the rest of the week lived a life of possessions, projects, plans: things to own, things to do, things to dream of accomplishing. We might pray to G-d. But it is not to ask Him what He wants of us that we do so. Rather, it is so that even G-d be put to work to help us achieve our secular goals. We need Him to help us with the problems we could not sort out ourselves. As one person put it, "It used to be, when I prayed to G-d, I was talking to Him; now, it's me talking to myself, and I'm only asking Him to help out with things."

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politics, that opposition had eroded by 1996, when a narrow majority said churches should freely express their views.

Several factors were at work, among them diminishing worry over economic and international threats and a growing concern over the turmoil of political scandals, high school shootings and hate crimes.

Other areas have also become more open to religion. 30 years ago, a philosopher was expected to hide his religious convictions, but today this has changed. In fact, Christian philosophers have their own association, which publishes a journal.

<sup>93</sup> Rodger Doyle: Religion in America (Scientific American, February 2003)

<sup>94</sup> For example, Kirk Johnson writes: In a sharply divided ruling, Colorado's highest court on Monday upheld a lower court's decision throwing out the sentence of a man who was given the death penalty after jurors consulted the Bible in reaching a verdict. The Bible, the court said, constituted an improper outside influence and a reliance on what the court called a "higher authority." (*Colorado Court Bars Execution Because Jurors Consulted Bible* March 29, 2005)

<sup>95</sup> In England the abortion issue played out mainly as being about social class. There were laws against abortion up to the late 1960's. Then people started to notice that women who could afford a safe abortion could get one very easily, while poor working-class girls were at the mercy of back-street practitioners. Once the unfairness of this had sunk in to the national consciousness, the laws were changed. Religion hardly came into it.

To this issue, we might add stem-cell research, and abstinence approaches to AIDS.

A thorough commitment to the sacred was now beyond the imagination, let alone the aspiration, of most Christians. Indeed, for Kierkegaard organized Christianity, Catholic and Protestant alike, is one more aspect of secularism<sup>96</sup>.

But, this is what had happened in America too. Many of the more ‘sophisticated’ Americans found it hard to take seriously someone who wants to inform all of their life with religion. Dorothy Day reports on her attempts in this regard: “I lived a Greenwich Village life for a long time. I wrote for liberal and radical journals. I didn’t completely like being called ‘serious,’ but it was meant as a compliment. I’d gone to jail [as a suffragette] and I’d criticized the country for its indifference to the poor- and my friends encouraged me and told me I was doing a good job. When I started saying the same things, actually, but in the name of G-d- well, that was a different matter all together! The first wave of disbelief took the form of worry: was I all right? It’s hard to fight that one! What do you do – ask if the person who is speaking those words is all right? Not if you’re trying to invoke the Jesus who prayed to the Lord that He forgive those who were mocking Him! I began to realize that in our secular world there’s plenty of room for social or cultural criticism, so long as it is secular in nature. But I’d crossed the street, you could say; I’d gone over to those crazy ones, who speak- well, one of my old drinking friends (he taught at Columbia) called it ‘G-d talk.’ He said to me once: ‘Dorothy, why do you now need “G-d Talk” to lay into America for all its wrongs? You used to do a great job when you were a muckraking reporter, with no “religion” sandwiched into your writing.’” ...

Stephen Carter in *The Culture of Disbelief*<sup>97</sup> argued that while the United States had all the trappings of a society which draw heavily on religion, it in fact marginalizes religion, making it something which private individuals are welcome to do, provided that nobody takes it seriously.<sup>98</sup> “If you must worship your G-d, so the lesson runs, at least have the courtesy to disbelieve in the power of prayer; if you must observe your Sabbath, have the good sense to understand that it is just like any other day off from work.”

## **Separation of church and state: government funding and school prayer**

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<sup>96</sup> There are some who claim that Christianity has long been very much part of the secular world – to the point that, in the Middle Ages, the Holy Roman Catholic Church had become in many respects an empire: rich, complacent, a player in all the intrigues of the day. It was this, in part, which led to the Reformation. But even Luther would demand a more rigorous adherence to the sacred. But Lutheranism itself, by claiming the church as a pillar of the nation-state’s authority, fell into the trap of secularism in one of its most evil forms, Nazism. The Lutheran church produced one lone voice, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was interned and finally killed on Hitler’s orders in 1945. He saw right away Hitler’s hateful secularism, but he, a Lutheran, saw his fellow Lutheran pastors embrace that version of secularism, wrap themselves in the swastika, even in the brown shirts of the street thugs who had run interference (and worse) for the rising, Austrian-born demagogue. In the end, Bonhoeffer took aim not only at Hitler but at Lutheranism as it came to such easy terms with him – the supposedly sacred – proving itself, in the name of realpolitik, the merely secular.

<sup>97</sup> pg. 7

<sup>98</sup> Nathan J. Diament (*Washington Times*, September 6, 1999) wrote that for decades, any law or regulation that would burden religious practice could only do so if it served a “compelling state interest” via the means “least restrictive” to religious liberty. This protection has been undone twice in recent years by the U.S. Supreme Court. Opposition comes from the ACLU and the gay rights community.

The Civil Rights Act was once understood to require employers to reasonably accommodate the religious needs of their employees. In recent years however, courts have interpreted the law so narrowly that there is virtually no protection for the religious needs of employees.

The First Amendment of the Constitution reads: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion<sup>99</sup>, or prohibiting the free expression thereof<sup>100</sup>; ....” Until the period under discussion, the religion clauses were understood as intended to ensure an America where religion, many religions in fact, flourish. The state was not supposed to favor one religion over another. It was never contemplated that secularism must be favored over faith. But, the courts came to interpret these words to prevent children in religious schools from receiving government assistance in their study of foreign languages, mathematics, or science. The courts from the Supreme Court down have used the idea of the “religion neutral state.” Anything that was even perceived as government support of religion – from the loan of instructional materials to the provision of public school remedial education teachers to parochial schools – was disallowed lest it compromise the secular character of the state. The flip side of this was that the court insisted that the state had to avoid burdening a citizen’s religious practice, even unintentionally. Thus, Jehovah’s Witnesses were declared exempt from pledging allegiance to the flag and the Amish exempt from formally schooling their children<sup>101</sup>.

In a series of decisions beginning with Everson v. Board of Education (1947), the Supreme Court read the “Establishment Clause” of the First Amendment to require a rigid “wall of separation” between government and religion. In Lemon v. Kurtzman, 1971), the court ruled that benefits which accrue directly to the parents of students and not to the schools themselves are permissible, including transport and the loaning of books. (Board of Education v. Allen, 1968). However, the Court’s decisions during the 1970’s created enormous hurdles for any form of assistance to religious schools, no matter how secular the content of the particular service<sup>102</sup>.

New York had established financial-aid programs for private and religious schools, including a partial tuition reimbursement, up to 50% of total tuition expenses, to low-income parents of students attending nonpublic schools and tax relief to parents who earned too much to participate in the tuition-reimbursement program but still sent their children to nonpublic schools. The court concluded that the New York programs were said to directly “subsidize and advance the religious mission of sectarian schools.” Despite the fact that the financial aid went directly to parents, not schools, the Court insisted that “the effect of the aid is unmistakably to provide desired financial support for nonpublic, sectarian institutions.” (Committee for Public Education & Religious Liberty (“PEARL”) v. Nyquist, 1973). The Court later withdrew from this radical position<sup>103</sup>.

The Courts then moved on to ban the reimbursement of even secular-studies teachers, wherever there is any concern that the teachers are going to attempt to inculcate religion in the classrooms (Lemon v. Kurtzman, 1971). Field-trips could not be paid for because field trips are “an integral part of the educational experience.” Public-school teachers could not give supplementary, remedial classes after-hours, on the grounds of a parochial school (Grand Rapids School District v. Ball, 1985) – there was a “substantial risk” that these teachers would “subtly (or overtly) conform their instruction to the [religious] environment in which they [taught].” The Court also concluded that the very presence of public-school

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<sup>99</sup> Often called the establishment clause

<sup>100</sup> Often called the freedom of expression clause

<sup>101</sup> Based on an articles by Nathan Lewin and Nathan J. Diamant posted on the Jewish Law website, Jlaw.com.

<sup>102</sup> Based on an articles by Nathan Lewin and Nathan J. Diamant posted on the Jewish Law website, Jlaw.com.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid

teachers on the grounds of religious schools created a “graphic symbol of the ‘concert or union or dependency of church and state.’”<sup>104</sup>

The peak of the anti-religious judgments came in Aguilar v. Felton, (1985). The Court required that all religious symbols be removed from classrooms when the public-school teacher was present. A “field supervisor” would have to make unannounced inspection visits at least once a month. But that, the court felt, was impossible, because it involved an unconstitutional “entanglement” between government and religion - excessive “government intrusion into sacred matters.” The only way that state-funded remedial education could be delivered to such children, would be to bus them to “mobile instructional units,” which were nothing more than vans converted into classrooms<sup>105</sup>.

But then began a trend in the other direction. The Court began to recognize that financial help to parents was ok, because the parents were freely choosing a religious school, and they were not getting any benefits that anyone else could get. Mueller v. Allen, (1983) In Witters v. Washington Department of Services, (1986), the courts even allowed Larry Witters, who suffered from a debilitating eye condition and was studying to become a pastor at a private Christian college to get state assistance for the handicapped. because “[a]ny aid provided under Washington’s program that ultimately flows to religious institutions does so only as a result of the genuinely independent and private choices of aid recipients.”<sup>106</sup> After that, in case after case, the court ruled more liberally in favor of awarding funds for secular programs in secular schools<sup>107</sup>.

## School Prayer

A second major issue had been school prayer.

In 1962, the Supreme Court banned organized school prayer. Moments of silence were allowed, but not moments of prayer<sup>108</sup>. (1985). This includes clergy-led prayers – invocations and benedictions – at public school graduation ceremonies<sup>109</sup>. (1992) In 1995, the

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid

<sup>105</sup> Ibid

<sup>106</sup> These were the words of Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall. Justice Marshall, who had dissented in Mueller, did not even mention that case in his Witters opinion.

<sup>107</sup> In 1993, the Supreme Court permitted the use of government funds to pay for a sign-language interpreter in an Arizona Catholic school (Zobrest v. Catalina Foothills School District).

<sup>108</sup> Moments of prayer were ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in Wallace v. Jaffree in 1985.

<sup>109</sup> “The Constitution forbids the state to exact religious conformity from a student as the price for attending her own high school graduation,” the court said then.

A national debate over school-sanctioned prayer focused on Santa Fe in 1995 when two families filed suit against the Galveston County school district, challenging its policies allowing student-led prayer. While the New Orleans-based 5th Circuit supported prayer at high school commencements, its ruling on sporting events ended the football tradition across Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas.

On September 4, 1999, in the first high school football game in Santa Fe, Texas, a 17-year-old student, Marian Lynn Ward as she asked God to bless the event. A one-minute standing ovation followed her remarks.

Santa Fe Independent School District Superintendent Richard Ownby had warned any student who violated an appeals court ruling banning pre-game prayer would be disciplined. But hours before kickoff, U.S. District Judge Sim Lake of Houston issued a temporary restraining order barring the school district southeast of Houston from punishing Miss Ward if she led the crowd in prayer. The school guidelines “clearly prefer atheism over any religious faith,” he ruled.

Clinton administration released guidelines for public school officials stressing that students have the right to engage in individual or group prayer during the school day. However, schools may not provide any religious instruction, although they may teach about religion, including the Bible, provided that it is not presented as the truth.

By, 1999, the tide appeared to be moving the other way. Students, but not staff, were increasingly allowed by the courts to lead prayers in schools<sup>110</sup> but not at high school football games<sup>111</sup>.

These attitudes were in contrast to the United Kingdom, where OFSTED inspectors, the Office of Standards in Education, is charged with reporting on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils in the state schools which they inspect<sup>112</sup>.

Bible Week proclamations have also come under attack<sup>113</sup> (Bible reading in class had been banned since the sixties) even where these are seen as merely “a recognition of the historical role of the Bible in American culture and history”.

Evolution vs. Creationism became another lightning rod of the religious wars. In 1999, the Kansas Board of Education voted to eliminate evolution from the state science curriculum altogether. This was derided by many a throwback to the Scopes “monkey trial.” On the other side, a biology professor at Texas Tech refused to write letters of recommendation for students who do not accept evolution as “the central, unifying principle of biology.”

Perhaps what America was reflecting at this time was not so much a rejection of religion per se, as much as an irreverence to tradition. The stress on freedom and creativity, on individuality and on a here and now materialism led to a society forever reinventing itself,

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<sup>110</sup> A federal appeals court threw out part of a judge’s ruling that restricted the right of students to pray and lead prayers in Alabama schools. The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta ruled 3-0 that in 1997 a federal judge, Ira Dement, wrongly restricted student-instigated prayer at DeKalb County schools. But the court did not throw out the judge’s restrictions against school officials leading prayers or other religious activities.

<sup>111</sup> In June, 2000, the Supreme Court ruled that public school districts cannot let students lead stadium crowds in prayer before high school football games. The 6-3 decision in a Texas case said such prayers violate the constitutionally required separation of government and religion.

“School sponsorship of a religious message is impermissible because it sends the ancillary message to members of the audience who are nonadherents that they are outsiders, not full members of the political community, and an accompanying message to adherents that they are insiders, favored members of the political community,” Justice John Paul Stevens wrote for the court.

“The delivery of such a message – over the school’s public address system by a speaker representing the student body, under the supervision of school faculty and pursuant to a school policy that explicitly and implicitly encourages public prayer – is not properly characterized as private speech,” he said.

When the Texas case was argued in March, an ABC News poll said two-thirds of Americans thought students should be permitted to lead such prayers. And in Texas’ Republican primary election last March, 94 percent of voters approved a nonbinding resolution backing student-initiated prayer at school sporting events. Texas Gov. George W. Bush, the presumed Republican presidential nominee, filed a brief urging the Supreme Court to uphold such student-led prayer.

<sup>112</sup> OFSTED’s *Framework for Inspection* (revised 1993 edition) runs: “Spiritual development relates to that aspect of the inner life through which pupils acquire insights into their personal existence which are of enduring worth. It is characterized by reflection, the attribution of meaning to experience, valuing a non-material dimension and intimations of an enduring reality. ...”

“Spiritual development ... is concerned with how an individual acquires beliefs and values, especially on questions about religion, whether life has purpose, and the basis for personal and social behavior ... it is therefore also about what a school provides ... to help individuals to make sense of these questions ... or even to questions about the universe.”

<sup>113</sup> More than 30 states and every president since Franklin Roosevelt have issued Bible Week proclamations. November 1998, the ACLU challenged the practice in court.

always looking for the new and the better, rather than looking to continue, and build on the traditions of the past.<sup>114</sup>

And yet, there was the realization that the much predicted death of G-d, did not take place. *Somehow, G-d survived .... flourished even*<sup>115</sup>.

Science and religion clashed less than ever as the Century wore on. And the great evils of the century were committed in the name of atheistic ideologies (Nazism and Communism), not religion or by state violence under other banners<sup>116</sup>.

The alternatives to G-d were found wanting, both in their attempts to describe the spiritual dimensions of man and in their ability to provide a coherent, secular humanist alternative. Some, like Jean Paul Sartre, were entirely discredited. Others, like Bertrand Russel or H.G Wells, simply became irrelevant and were forgotten<sup>117</sup>.

### c- The failure of secularism

The Quest for G-d, Paul Johnson:

“Atheism as a positive set of beliefs, including a code of moral behavior, has failed to flourish. ... Except for a small minority ... denial of G-d has no appeal. The vast majority are, and probably always will be, believers or agnostics. I suspect the reason why atheism has so little attraction is precisely our awareness of a desire in ourselves to do good. ... The conscience can never quite be killed. And because it exists and we know it exists, we are periodically driven to ponder – or half-ponder-the question – how did it get there? Who put it there? Darwinism may be everywhere the received wisdom, and the process of natural selection may be unthinkingly accepted as scientific proof. But these scientific explanations cannot tell us why humanity became uniquely self-conscious. Nor can they explain why an ineradicable part of self-consciousness is precisely our conscience ... (pgs. 2-3)

The most extraordinary thing about the 20th Century was the failure of G-d to die. The collapse of mass religious belief, especially among the educated and the prosperous, had been

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<sup>114</sup> See Alan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, Section One, his chapter on tradition.

<sup>115</sup> Paul Johnson, *The Quest for G-d*, pg. 6

<sup>116</sup> Johnson, *ibid*, 14-15

More than 150 million people have been killed by state violence in our century.

<sup>117</sup> Johnson, *ibid* pg. 19-21

It is now impossible to point to a single pronouncement of [the 20th Century humanist, H.G. Wells] on society in his own day which carries the ring of truth or even mere plausibility. ... Bertrand Russel ... was perhaps the leading evangelist of anti-G-d rationalism in this century. ... The truth is, Russel could not devise a [humanist] alternative to G-d which convinced even himself for more than a few years; his secular faith was in a state of constant osmosis, like that of Auguste Comte, who occupied the same position of intellectual eminence in the mid-nineteenth century as Russel did in the twentieth and is now simply a joke, if a pathetic one. (pgs. 20-21)

[Another leading humanist] Jean Paul Sartre ... bewildered even his intellectual followers, who were once numerous. ... The political writings of Sartre were immensely pernicious among the French-educated leaders of the Third World in South-East Asia and North Africa. The genocidal leaders of the Pol Pot regime were in a sense Sartre's children. In general however, the humanist impact was ephemeral and in many respects superficial. Millions read Wells and saw the plays of George Bernard Shaw, found them clever, were impressed for a time, then laughed, as the absurdities and misjudgments – and essential frivolity – of both became manifest, and went their ordinary humble ways as before. (22-23)

widely and confidently predicted. It did not take place. Somehow, G-d survived, flourished even. (pg. 6)

(Marx, building on Hegel, stated that religion was a mere phase of history, destined to disappear with history. This was reinforced by scientific discovery.) In the 1820's and 1830's [when] the traditional chronology and historicity of the Old Testament were fatally undermined, or so it seemed. (This was followed by the Darwinian revolution, and the replacement of Newtonian physics, which religious philosophers had reconciled with religion by quantum and Einsteinian physics.)

[Yet, amazingly, it is] a notable fact of the 20th Century that, during it, science and religion ceased to be enemies. Looking back on them, the great rows between the clergy and scientists in the nineteenth century seem childish. ... Science, having once appeared to destroy the historicity of the Bible, now seems more likely, on the whole to corroborate it. (pgs. 11-14)

[Another factor leading to G-d is] the dreadful events of our century. The evil done in our times is beyond computation and almost beyond the imaginations of our forebears. There is nothing in the previous history of the world to compare with the scale and intensity of the two world wars ... More than 150 million people have been killed by state violence in our century.

[The horrors of the 20th Century] were instrumental in turning men and women towards G-d rather than against Him. Most people saw the wars themselves as products of Godlessness, materialism and sin, and their perpetrators as those who had banished G-d from their hearts. And it is undeniable that the two great institutional tyrannies of the century – indeed of all time – the Nazi Reich and the Soviet Union were Godless constructs; modern paganism in the first case and openly proclaimed atheist materialism in the second. (pgs. 14-15)

There is a third reason why belief in G-d has survived in the 20th Century. That is the total and, in many cases abject, failure of the alternatives to G-d. ... (Often, the humanists, those who denounced G-d and religion, did so with a fanaticism that makes one wonder.) For example, in 1764, ... Voltaire, their leader, wrote: "Theological religion is the enemy of mankind." Note: Not an enemy; but the enemy. There are many enemies of mankind today, many more than in Voltaire's time, I fear, but no-one in his right senses would put "theological religion" high on his list. Or again, here is Winwood Reade, whose powerful tract *The Martyrdom of Man* was a bible to many atheists in the late nineteenth century: The destruction of Christianity is essential to the interests of civilization. Note again the tone of extremism: not 'desirable' but 'essential.' Today our civilization, or what is left of it, seems far more fragile than in Reade's fortunate life-time, and were he to return to earth today I do not feel he would find a solitary soul, agnostic, atheist or anything else, who would agree that the destruction of Christianity is essential to keep civilization going. Quite the reverse. The vast majority see it as a prop, however feeble. (pg. 19)

Other central propositions of the [humanist] faction ... seem equally ridiculous with the passage of time. ... The ones who appear the most absurd are precisely those who tried to apply the principles of contemporary science – the frontiers of knowledge – to explain the world in non-religious terms. The French lexicographer Emile Littré defined 'soul' as 'anatomically the sum of functions of the neck and spinal column, physiologically the sum of function of the perception of the brain.' ... The German follower of Darwin, Ernst Haeckel, by contrast, wrote: 'We know that ... the soul [is] a sum of plasma-movements in the ganglion cells.' In England, Professor John Tyndall thought 'all life' was 'once latent in a fiery cloud.' In France, the philosopher-historian Hyppolite Taine stated: 'Man is a spiritual automaton ... Vice and virtue are products like sugar and vitriol.' ... (pg. 20)

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[Far more serious than all of this are the great movements of the 20th Century, Nazism and Communism. Both were clearly virulently anti-G-d initiatives and both heaped unprecedented destruction on the face of the earth. They remind us that alternative secular systems can and do kill:] whether the six million Jews slaughtered by Hitler, or the twenty million Russians done to death by Stalin, or Pol Pot's massacre of a third of the population of Kampuchea, or Mao's prodigious mass-slaughter on a scale we do not yet know [estimated figures of up to 40 million!] ... (pg. 31)

[Other 'secular religions' include race and sexual politics. Both] begin with a legitimate demand, and then proceed rapidly to request, indeed insist on, unwarranted privilege. (pg. 30)

There is, then, no alternative to G-d, so far as I can see-so far as our twentieth-century experience teaches us. (pg. 33)"

#### **d- The problem of man-made religion**

*NY Times Book Review*, July 25, 1999, by Reynolds Price on The Secular Mind by Robert Coles, Princeton University Press.

... Dorothy Day – the American Catholic exponent of social mercy and justice – told Coles: "Some people say to me, 'The secular mind is your enemy.' I say no, no; I say the secular mind is God's huge gift to us, for us to use for the sake of one another."

... Polls of American opinion consistently tell us that a substantial majority of us are convinced believers in the articles of some religious creed or other and that we, in theory, adhere to their ethical prescriptions. Yet the public voice of ethical and spiritual propaganda as it flows, for example, from the Christian right in America poses a constant and urgent question. If these promoters are expressing the results of their particular sacred thoughts, then aren't many quite common kinds of sacred thinking genuinely dangerous to our freedom, our legacy of tolerance and sympathy and ultimately our sanity? In fact, it is possible to argue cogently that sacred thought in the hands of politicians can have very little to offer a population as various as our own. From Papal Europe in the Middle Ages to David Koresh's commune, past examples of theocracy are hardly models for private or civic emulation. By its very nature, any sustained thought about a transcendent Creator and moral judge can only originate in the thoughts and experience of single human beings.

And the progress of that profoundly personal insight to larger collections of believers has been observed so often in our history as to warn us of society's need to monitor carefully all forms of pressure from any group that claims universal validity for its own theology and ethics.

**e- The need for religious values in schools**

Charles Krauthammer in *Newsweek*, November 22, 1999 wrote the following article. It was titled *The Real Message of Creationism: It brings religious values into schools by the back door. Why not the front?*

When the Kansas Board of Education voted recently to eliminate evolution from the state science curriculum, .... the decision has been widely derided as a sign of resurgent Middle American obscurantism, a throwback to the Scopes "monkey trial." ...

Ever since the Supreme Court decision of 1963 barring prayer from the public schools, any attempt to import not just prayer but biblical studies, religious tenets and the like into the schools is liable to end up in court. ...<sup>118</sup>

The Kansas school board decision on evolution is so significant ... because [it is] an important cultural indicator. It represents the reaction of people of faith to the fact that all legitimate expressions of that faith in their children's public schooling are blocked by the new secular ethos. In a society in which it is unconstitutional to post the Ten Commandments in school, creationism is a back door to religion, brought in under the guise – the absurd yet constitutionally permitted guise – of science.

This pedagogic sleight of hand, by the way, did not originate with religious folk. Secularists have for years been using biology instruction as a back door for inculcating their values. A sex-ed class on the proper placement of a condom is more than instruction in reproductive mechanics. It is a seminar – unacknowledged and tacit but nonetheless powerful – on permissible sexual mores.

Religion – invaluable in America's founding, forming and flowering – deserves a place in the schools. Indeed, it had that place for almost 200 years. A healthy country would teach its children evolution and the Ten Commandments. The reason that Kansas is going to have precisely the opposite – the worst of both worlds – is not because Kansans are primitives, but because a religious people has tried to bring the fruits of faith, the teachings and higher values of religion, into the schools and been stymied.

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<sup>118</sup> *G-d, American History and a Fifth-Grade Class*: Dean E. Murphy, December 2004: Steven J. Williams, an evangelical Christian who teaches fifth grade at a public school in Cupertino, Calif., is fast becoming a folk hero among conservative Christians. In an affluent town in a region identified with the liberal elite, Mr. Williams has single-handedly turned the Declaration of Independence into a powerful tool for the Christian right in its battle against secularist teaching of colonial history, thrusting God and Christianity into the very same history lesson as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. When Mr. Williams, 38, gave his students at Stevens Creek Elementary School a proclamation from President Bush last May about national prayer day, a parent complained that it amounted to too much religion in the classroom. Mr. Williams said it was meant only as an example of a presidential proclamation. But there had been other complaints, including one about a discussion Mr. Williams led regarding the reference to God in the Pledge of Allegiance. And in April, he says, his principal intervened to prevent him from teaching a lesson he had prepared about Easter. More than a year ago, the principal, Patricia Vidmar, had advised Mr. Williams - a self-described "orthodox Christian" - that she worried he "would try to proselytize his Christian faith to the students in his classroom," according to a federal lawsuit filed two weeks ago on Mr. Williams's behalf by Alliance Defense Fund, a conservative Christian group based in Arizona. What has ensued has opened a window on the increasingly high-pitched struggle taking place in a number of schools across the country over how much God should be taught in American history, a battle that has raged for many years but is intensifying as conservative groups feel invigorated in pushing their viewpoint and as defenders of a more secular approach are put more on the defensive.

The result is a kind of perverse Law of Conservation of Faith. Block all teaching of religious ideas? O.K., we'll sneak them in through biology.

Frank Rick: *The G-d Racket, From DeMille to DeLay* (March 2005): ...That bullying, stoked by politicians in power, has become omnipresent, leading television stations to practice self-censorship and high school teachers to avoid mentioning "the E word," evolution, in their classrooms, lest they arouse fundamentalist rancor. The president is on record as saying that the jury is still out on evolution, so perhaps it's no surprise that The Los Angeles Times has uncovered a three-year-old "religious rights" unit in the Justice Department that investigated a biology professor at Texas Tech because he refused to write letters of recommendation for students who do not accept evolution as "the central, unifying principle of biology." Cornelia Dean of The New York Times broke the story last weekend that some Imax theaters, even those in science centers, are now refusing to show documentaries like "Galápagos" or "Volcanoes of the Deep Sea" because their references to Darwin and the Big Bang theory might antagonize some audiences. Soon such films will disappear along with biology textbooks that don't give equal time to creationism. James Cameron, producer of "Volcanoes" (and, more famously, the director of "Titanic"), called this development "obviously symptomatic of our shift away from empiricism in science to faith-based science." Faith-based science has in turn begat faith-based medicine that impedes stem-cell research, not to mention faith-based abstinence-only health policy that impedes the prevention of unwanted pregnancies and diseases like AIDS.

#### **f- Non-traditional expressions of spirituality amongst American Jewry**

David Weinberg reported the following in the *Jerusalem Post*, February 20, 2000:

... The search for "spirituality" among American Jews is all the rage, with "Jewish renewal" and "kabbalistic healing retreats" a stock item on the community calendar. Entire synagogue movements have taken to producing experimental and "progressive" Jewish "discovery ceremonies," which seek to combine touchy-feely celebrations of the sunrise with stories of Elisha the mystical prophet and some fuzzy sense of meaning for Jews in almost-everything-goes America.

... Prof. Charles Liebman of Bar-Ilan University, a leading political sociologist of American Jewry and a Conservative Jew, argues that this privatized, spiritualist Judaism is a serious problem because it releases Jews from obligations which devolve from the organized Jewish discipline, and consequently weakens their commitment to collectives, such as the Jewish people. The fluctuations inherent in spiritualized Judaism, he says, do not make for a stable, coherent framework for Jewish group identity and continuity.

... Liebman has tracked the shift in America away from what he calls "ethnic Judaism" toward "privatized religion." Ethnic Judaism emphasizes themes such as peoplehood, community, and solidarity, and its surpassing moments are fund-raising Super Sundays and collective mobilizations for Israel.

Privatized religion, in contrast, speaks in softer terms of individual meaning, journeys of discovery, spirituality, and personal fulfillment. Its emphases are interpersonal rather than collective. It is focused on self-realization through episodic, emotional experience and is thus intuitive and nonbinding. Liebman says this reduces Jewishness to an acquired taste, a take-it-or-leave-it affair.

Indeed, Liebman charges, spirituality is not the answer to the Jewish problem in America; it is the problem. Instead of emphasizing the central Jewish concepts of obligation to, and responsibility before, an awesome and authoritative God, spirituality substitutes anarchy.

The spirituality kick, warns Liebman, proffers a Judaism focused upon the legitimization of self and the kinds of lives American Jews already have chosen to lead. It allows American Jews to relate to Judaism as an informal, leisure-time activity, something to tinker with until you feel good, or high.

“Spirituality” taken as the ultimate Jewish goal also blurs the distinctions between Jew and non-Jew. Experience-based religiosity has no intrinsic justification for exclusion or boundaries; it necessarily includes all who are partner to the inspirational moment.

Consider, for example, “The Living Waters Weekend” offered to congregants by co-rabbis Philip and Shoni Labowitz of Temple Adath Or in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Their “Jewish Renewal Retreat” includes the following: “Optional sunrise walk and meditation. Musical workshop service at the ocean. Guided conscious eating at breakfast. Water exercises for body toning. Yoga with kabbala. Outdoor games, time for massage. Sacred gathering for men and women. Poetry readings and music. Havdala ritual on the beach. Sunrise co-ed mikva ritual in the ocean. Breakfast celebration with new affirmation. Kabbalistic meditation. Sacred sharing ceremony.”

This is Judaism? Does anybody believe that such licentious, libertine, and lustful gobbledygook will ensure Jewish continuity?

We are commanded to be a “holy,” not a “spiritual” people, Liebman reminds us, meaning that the emphasis in traditional Judaism is on living a virtuous life, a life of kedusha or holiness. Holiness evokes an outside source whom we obey and a code of behavior to which we submit. It is achieved in a minyan, as part of a public, standardized observance. Holiness is not achieved through trendy transcendence, super-personalized other-worldliness, or ever-adjustable “Jewish healing rituals” at the poolside. ...

Why is this happening? Because Judaism in America, says Liebman, has become excessively market-oriented. Temples seek to attract as many new members as possible by “satisfying” them. This means that congregations tend to accept and accommodate prevailing American cultural norms rather than rejecting or seeking to restructure those norms...

### *iii- Lack of tradition and reverence*

The stress on freedom and creativity, on individuality and on a here and now materialism has led to an attitude of irreverence and a disdain for tradition. America is seen as the society forever reinventing itself, always looking for the new and the better, rather than looking to continue, and build on the traditions of the past.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> See Alan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, Section One, his chapter on tradition. The following article in the Jerusalem Post (September 3, 1999) by Rabbi Berel Wein, although written with an Israeli slant, shows this idea very well:

One of the unfortunate hallmarks of modern Western civilization is a lack of reverence towards everything and everyone. I am not at all critical of the healthy exchange of ideas, of political and national debate, or even of subtle satire and humor. But I am speaking about the complete lack of respect, of the absence of any sense of reverence towards long-cherished values, traditions and heroes of the Jewish people and of Israel.

The damage caused by revisionist historians and their works is incalculable. Most of the time they are forced to be sensational, and thus violently irreverent towards accepted traditions and facts, in order to justify their having written a book on subject matter long ago covered and explained by others. They have to be new and original and creative, and that is only possible if they contradict all of the previously accepted norms and understandings. This is a worldwide trend and the purposeful irreverence of modern intellectualism toward past truths has many negative consequences for the present and the future.

And this trend is not limited to historians.

Popular humor and comedy now is in the main cruel, vicious and punishing.

In the new world of entertainment the mobsters and the stalkers, the violent and the unscrupulous, are the heroes, the main characters, while the decent person is the chump and the fool. And then we wonder why there is so much violence in our society!

The Torah and Talmud taught us about reverence for life. All life is sacred. It is from this reverence for life that violence in all forms was abhorred. Animals were to be treated also with a reverence, their needs provided for and their unnecessary pain spared. Clothing, an inanimate item, was also to be a subject of reverence and respect. The Bible teaches us that when the great King David became old his body could not be warmed even when covered with layers of clothing. The Rabbis commented that this was because in his youth he had not displayed proper reverence for clothing, neither his own nor that of King Saul.

Clothing today is the temple of irreverence. It is used to make a statement to society, to identify oneself as a rebel, to taunt and provoke others.

In spite of all of the efforts of the environmental groups, Israeli society has little reverence for the land, its resources and appearance. The attitude of reverence must be all-encompassing. And if it is missing in one area of human life, it is weakened in all other areas.

Simply put, reverence is a sense of respect for someone else's feelings and person, for the world we live in, for the past, and for the efforts of those who have gone before us. It is the ability to see things in perspective. If we keep on rewriting history to fit current political perspective (i.e., the Jews were Goliath and the poor Arabs were David in the War of Independence, etc.) there is no history – only current events foisted on the past. If all of Israel's past heroes, biblical, historical, national and religious, are to be constantly debunked, satirized and mocked, we will raise jaded, cynical and self-hating future generations.

Under the sometimes self-serving banner of "the public's right to know" the modern print and electronic media have devoured all the heroes of the past, leaving only the mockery of their bleached bones to entertain us. This is a dangerous gambit that is destructive of faith and hope and optimism – ingredients necessary for successful national life. The secular Jew has the choice of being non-observant or irreligious or whatever else he or she wishes to be or not to be. But I don't feel that this grants open license to be completely callous and irreverent about over 3,000 years of Jewish life.

One can deny the authenticity of the Bible, argue about its authorship, disregard its tenets and commandments and still be a professor of Bible in Israel. But where is the license to mock the Book of Books and to ridicule those who steadfastly believe in it?

There certainly should be room for reverence regarding traditions, beliefs, and lifestyles that have identified us as Jews for millennia.

Harry Austryn Wolfson, professor of Jewish Literature and Thought at Harvard University in the earlier part of this century, was once asked his opinion as to what so differentiated the Jews from the society in which they lived. He replied that it was not so much Jewish behavior as Jewish attitude. "When a Jew drops a book that he deems to be holy and worthy, he picks it up and kisses it. There is no other people in the world that kisses its books – not the English with Shakespeare, nor the Greeks with Homer, not even most Christians with the Christian Bible." Reverence – kissing a holy book that had dropped – was the hallmark of the Jew. Reverence is far removed from observance, but it is an expression of loyalty and Jewish self-worth and self-identity.

Without reverence, society is in-your-face, discourteous, confrontational, and eventually unlivable.

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Alex Markels, *Reinvention; Whoever We Want to Be*: U.S. News & World Report, June 28 / July 5, 2004: ...Americans new and old have always believed in the opportunity – indeed, the right – to reinvent their lives in whatever idiosyncratic ways they choose, a trait that, ironically, has come to define our commonality as Americans....our government-sanctioned manifest destiny encouraged us not only to put down roots most anywhere we pleased but to pick up and move somewhere else whenever we felt the urge. "An American will build a house in which to pass his old age and sell it before the roof is on," wrote Alexis de Tocqueville. "He will take up a profession and leave it, settle in one place and soon go off elsewhere with his changing desires." Thus we continue our collective worship of the blank sheet of paper. Our literature celebrates the fresh start at every turn, from F. Scott Fitzgerald's Jimmy Gatz, who transformed himself into the great Jay Gatsby, to Jack Kerouac's Sal Paradise, who reinvented himself *On the Road* in a way that has become a rite of passage for young Americans. So, of course, do bulging shelves of self-help books, each title promising to help us re-create our business, our careers, and our bodies....With everyone from rock stars to presidents swelling the ranks of the reborn, even those who aren't converts believe in a sort of instant karma, a chance not only to become the "new you" overnight but also to erase the "old you" with as little as a prayer or a plastic surgeon's knife."

Nancy Shute, U.S. News and World Report January 3, 2000: *OUTLOOK 2000 - Inventing the Future*: One hundred years ago, scientists were grappling with the new knowledge that invisible organisms called bacteria caused disease; that the energy that emanated from radium could create images of people's bones; that atoms weren't in fact the smallest units in the universe. Since then, we've learned that space and time are relative terms; we've flown at Kitty Hawk, smashed atoms, stepped on the moon, banished smallpox, and wired the world to the Internet. It would be easy to presume that the past 100 years were the golden age of discovery. Well, you ain't seen nothing yet. The pace of innovation in the United States is roaring and will only accelerate in the years to come. One key reason: The tools of invention are so much better than before. Einstein worked out the theory of relativity with paper and pencil and could only speculate on the true nature of subatomic particles. Today's physicists craft their equations on desktop computers and buttress them with hard data: they've tracked neutrinos in their eccentric flight. Meteorologists use computer models to more accurately predict the course of killer hurricanes. Pharmacologists can manipulate a 3-D portrait of a drug molecule on-screen like a Tinkertoy, shaping it to match its target in the body. Astronomers armed with telescopes of awesome size and clarity have for the first time recorded the reflected light of a planet outside our solar system. (Dozens more have been detected since 1995 by charting their gravitational influence.) Into the 1980s, biologists scoffed at the suggestion that it was possible to catalog the 3 billion DNA base pairs in the human body. In 2000, the rough draft of the human genome will be delivered, ahead of schedule, thanks to robots and high-speed computers. The marriage of machinery and computational muscle is yielding astonishing insights. Neurologists use magnetic resonance imagers to watch the brain at work, thoughts and feelings lighting up the screen like ghostly messages from the netherworld. Engineers craft tiny sensors that could detect an advancing army—or find a wandering toddler at the mall. Surgeons employ three robotic arms for open-heart surgery, minimizing the incision—and the recovery time. And in the next few years, the tools at hand will become even more powerful. Researchers have already built a transistor so small it can hide under a virus. Machines will shrink further, entering an era of "nanotechnology" in which invisible devices just atoms wide will perform tasks as mundane as adjusting the lighting in a room—or as vital as hunting down cancer cells. Computers are in for a radical makeover, too. With the silicon-based microprocessor nearing the limit of its capabilities, researchers are devising ultrafast circuits—built not on wires and chips but on quantum particles, or even DNA. That's hot stuff, but by all accounts the transformations afoot in telecommunications and the Internet will have a much deeper impact on society than the computer—and the effects, like the Internet itself, will grow exponentially, as being connected becomes cheaper and simpler. Already, hundreds of devices are in development to replace the much loathed PC and merge it with the telephone and television. Handheld tablets, interactive E-books, in-ear cell phones, voice-activated wearable devices—they'll be wireless, they'll be linked to each other and to the Internet, and they'll offer a vast menu. Imagine voice mail, *I Love Lucy*, E-shopping, techno music, high school homework assignments, and family photo albums, all accessible anywhere, anytime. Bandwidth is being stretched and stitched together to bear the traffic, with fiber-optic cable and clever wireless technology. This wild blossoming of communications, in a nice bit of synergy, feeds more innovation. Where 15 years ago only Ph.D.'s at the big research institutions could debate ideas on the Internet, now anyone with a \$19.95 E-mail account can develop a notion and test it on the world. Money flows along the same channels. The ease of communications democratizes invention as well as its risks and rewards. "We'll never be able to predict which technologies will become market successes," says Bob Lucky, an inventor of modem technology and vice president of Telcordia in Red Bank, N.J. "In a free market, you risk that if a technology works, you get your money back—and if it doesn't, you lose." Ultimately, we will feel the transformations wrought by these innovations in our own bodies. The past few decades have seen the beginnings of a revolution in biology—the ability to manipulate human genes and cells at the molecular level. In 1998, researchers persuaded a few cells from a human embryo to grow in the lab, and those stem cells gave birth to the hope of growing tissue to repair damaged hearts and other organs or to replace them altogether. An electrode lodged in the brain of a paralyzed stroke victim lets him guide a computer cursor with his thoughts, anticipating the advent of Terminator-like meldings of man and machine. And the sequencing of the human genome promises not only to jump-start our comprehension of heredity and disease but to give us a much clearer vision of what it means to be human....

Together with a lack of tradition goes a lack of irreverence, not just of the past, but ultimately of the sacred as well. By respecting all things and all people, we ultimately respect none. One has to see the approach to religion in this context.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> The following, edited article by Ned Crabb appeared in Reader's Digest:

When I was a boy (henceforth WIWAB), a youngster began the slow metamorphosis from childhood to manhood when, during such quaint activities as going out to dinner with his family or attending a semi-formal dance, he hung up his baseball cap and sported a fedora, a smaller version of the one Dad wore. Similarly, girls put aside their Girl Scout berets and stocking caps and began imitating their mothers' more dignified millinery.

Hats were once prominent among those garments that symbolized a transition from looking like a child to looking like an adult. A complete ensemble of such adult clothing gave the wearer an appearance and sense of dignity.

Today, we have lost much of the personal dignity once inherent in our clothes, especially our casual clothes, and I do believe it began with hats. More and more adults are now dressing like children, as "dress down Fridays" and other excuses for "fun" clothes intrude upon offices everywhere.

And what are we wearing these days instead of fedoras or even newsboy-style caps for men and cloche or wide-brimmed hats for women? We are wearing a baseball cap, once a thing of manly distinction but now made ridiculous because it is almost universally worn reversed, and because it has an open semicircle in what once was the back of the cap and an inelegant little plastic, adjustable strap.

No man, and certainly no woman, looks good or sporty or "cool" in a reversed baseball cap. They look, if you'll pardon the vernacular, like dorks.

Grandfathers and fathers, once figures of veneration in tweed coats and cardigan sweaters, and grandmothers and mothers, once figures of respect in dresses or tailored slacks and starched blouses, are now seen disporting themselves in public in sweat pants. These are among the ugliest clothing ever conceived, looking, even when laundered, like toddlers' dirty pajamas. They should have never left the locker room.

Now, three generations of an American family – children, parents and grandparents – can promenade the avenues of the world's great cities or spas similarly haberdashed and coutured: baggy shorts; T-shirts or sweat shirts with cartoons of woodpeckers or wart hogs or other images of popular-culture icons or asinine one-sentence philosophies; enormous ugly sneakers garishly decorated with various colors and stripes, zigzagged leather strips and mesh fabrics, looking like Buck Rogers spaceships straining to zoom away from the wearer's feet; ridiculous little "fanny packs" around their waists; and inevitably those ghastly caps.

WIWAB, grown men and women had too much respect for themselves and their families to dress like clowns. And this has nothing whatever to do with class or wealth or race. Once, and not so terribly long ago, adults of every class, race and income level conformed, within a wide enough range to permit many different expressions of individuality and regionality, to a generally accepted idea of what men and women should look like. Even the poorest Americans did not look like something that popped out of a jack-in-the-box.

#### *iv- Pace of life, consumerism*

At least some of the lack of reverence for tradition comes from two factors, the ever-quickenning pace of life and the increasing consumer society, where things are designed to be used and thrown away.

One of the books voted by *Time Magazine* as one of the best non-fictional books of 1999, is called Faster by James Glick. In it he examines how we became infected with “hurry sickness” and points out that such innovations as cell phones, microwave ovens and the Internet only exacerbate the symptoms. Once a task has been speeded up, going back is hard to do.

Consumerism also leads to a desire for instantaneous gratification. Recently, the antidepressant Paxil was launched as a treatment from social phobia. Paxil is touted as a cure for being “allergic to people.” One of the effects of hyperculture is to make people impatient for anything but a pill that instantly reduces their anxiety level.

*Shop Until You Stop: The Problem of Consumer Satiety*: Richard Tomkins on Consumer Culture, *Financial Times*, Tuesday April 12, 2005: ...the industrial revolution – and with it, previously undreamed-of material progress.... It also... brought satiety. But this could never be admitted. Think of the implication! Without demand for ever more stuff, there would be no economic growth, company profits would stagnate and progress as we know it would cease. So we invented the consumer society to generate new desires for things we never knew we needed: Jimmy Choo shoes, rainforest adventure holidays and pajamas for our dogs....manufacturers... present consumers with ceaseless novelty: perpetually reformulating and repackaging their products, extending the range with new variants, flavours and colours or extending the brand into other product areas....Tiring of familiar products, large numbers of people are ready to trade up to premium-priced versions of goods ranging from coffee to cars. Clothes labels such as 7 For All Mankind find they can charge \$100-\$200 or more for a pair of denim jeans, previously regarded as a humdrum wardrobe staple. And food lovers are prepared to pay ludicrous sums for upmarket versions of simple commodities: in the US, a 7oz tub of Ravida Sicilian sea salt sells for \$9, more than 50 times the price per pound of ordinary table salt. So mass luxury is one market opportunity. Another, with the need for material comforts largely satisfied, is to address people's emotional needs....I am thinking, for example, of things that pamper or enhance people's self-image, such as spa breaks or cosmetic surgery; things that appeal to spiritual needs, such as designer rosary beads, Kabbalah Energy Drink or the junk you find in those new age shops; or things that have any relation to the self-indulgence, egomania and sheer, preposterous vanity of so-called therapy culture.

*Pursuing Happiness in Our Time*, John Leland: ...as market definitions of happiness began to grow with the economy in the 19th century, they brought their own doses of unhappiness. "The consumer culture ... is about keeping us dissatisfied and unhappy, until we get the next thing. For Jefferson and his generation of thinkers, the whole notion of happiness was more sustainable, embedded in social and community responsibility."

James Gorman, April 2004:<sup>121</sup> People want to look younger, rather than different — to have the face in their mind's eye, not the one in the mirror. They want quicker, less expensive and less invasive procedures, and new medical technologies are feeding and increasing the demand. Along with the incremental improvements come other changes. Surgeons are seeing

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<sup>121</sup> *Plastic Surgery Gets a New Look*

the numbers and percentage of men increase, and treating younger as well as older patients as cosmetic improvement becomes a lifelong pursuit.

Surgeons, Dr. Young said, are backing off from more aggressive surgeries and moving toward nips, tucks and injections. Operate early and often might be the new motto. Traditional cosmetic self-improvement, in the form of breast enlargement and nose surgery, are still significant, but surgeons see their field in the process of transformation.

The change, said Dr. Brian Kinney of Los Angeles, a member of the trends panel, "comes for three or four reasons." One is younger people who aren't going to wait," Dr. Kinney said. "They want to start surgery now. Smaller budgets. They don't want to spend as much money. Also, they don't have time. We're an instant-gratification society."

## v- *Education*

Angela G. King wrote the following article:

“Our schools and educators are being asked to do something that no society has ever asked of a school system in the history of humankind, and that is to educate all children well,” says Hugh Price, the president of the National Urban League. “Back when I was in school, the schools were geared to treat a handful of students well. To the rest of the students they said, ‘If you don’t act up, we’ll let you stay until you graduate. If you do act up, you can drop out and join the Army.’ Now we expect all schools to serve all children well.”

However, this democratization of education, which started in the sixties, quickly led to a significant drop in college education. Up until that time, universities were places which offered a classical education on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. There was a reasonable consensus as to what the classics were, and that they had to be studied as a part of a liberal education. College campuses felt themselves immune from market forces where the consumer is always right.

However, with the student unrest in the sixties, all that changed. Students demanded more of a say in the subjects that they were taught; feminists activated for a greater representation of female writers and whole courses on feminist issues, and Blacks demanded their share too. The banners of multiculturalism, deconstruction and feminism seemed to be able to justify any approach and almost any standard. What seemed to matter more than rigorous study was the opportunity for ethnic or gender celebration. Universities increasingly began to compete for students by offering what the students wanted rather than needed, and many colleges actually had their students grade their lecturers. Once students were recruited, it was expected that they would be kept happy, including through grade inflation. Arts degrees became more and more trivial and many campuses attempted to be more and more like resorts.

But it has not been only college professors who seem to have abandoned all standards. Other sources of wisdom have also abandoned any attempt to set standards. Take dictionaries. Along with the publication, between 1972 and 1986, of four fat folios supplementing the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the unabridged *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* is the most important dictionary venture since 1966, when Random House’s first edition appeared.

*RHD-II* contains 50,000 new entries, most of them words that have come into use since 1966. Novels, films and even White House tapes have brought expletives into more common currency, so that what once might have shocked a longshoreman is now an honorable dictionary entry. *RHD-I* listed only the lesser of the two most familiar four-letter words. *RHD-II* adds the ultimate one. At the same time, *RHD-II* is compared with its predecessor, a monument to feminist consciousness-raising. Mankind never appears in its definitions where people is meant, nor is anyone of unknown gender ever a he.

*RHD-I* happened to debut in the midst of the fiercest lexicographical debate of the century. *Webster’s* third edition had appeared five years earlier and howls of protest were still resounding. *Webster’s* editors, in the name of scientific objectivity, had largely abandoned the role assumed by dictionary makers since Dr. Johnson’s day: serving as a guide to usage and attaching warning labels such as colloquial, erroneous and illiterate to words that deserve inclusion but not endorsement. To Philip Gove, *Webster’s* then editor-in-chief, such discriminations were “artificial notions of correctness or superiority,” and he wanted no part of them. A dictionary, he wrote, “must be descriptive and not prescriptive.” In this he spoke for the dominant school of modern linguistics, which abhors the very idea of setting standards as snobbish, authoritarian and downright undemocratic. Gove’s approach led, in one

notorious example, to *Webster's* assuring readers that “ain’t” was “used orally in most parts of the U.S. by many cultivated speakers.”<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> *Surveying the State of the Lingo*, Times, November 2, 1987

## *vi- Marriage*

### **Decline of Marriage**

Marriage is in definite, serious decline in American society. People are getting married older and older<sup>123</sup>, less and less are describing their marriages as “very happy”<sup>124</sup> and more and more people are living together without getting married.<sup>125</sup> While people who describe themselves as Catholic or Protestant have a much lower divorce rate than the average, people who define themselves as Jewish do only slightly better than the national average.<sup>126</sup>

The decline of marriage and the family has now been going on for half a century. By 2001, less than a quarter of the households in the United States were made up of married couples with their children.<sup>127</sup> That results from a number of factors, like many men and women delaying both marriage and having children, more couples living longer after their adult children leave home and the number of single-parent families growing much faster than the number of married couples.

Indeed, the number of families headed by women who have children grew nearly five times faster in the 1990’s than the number of married couples with children.<sup>128</sup> Some of these women had children while still married. However, there are a huge number who had children out of wedlock.<sup>129</sup> The implications of this are vast and widespread. They affect the emotional health of the nation, education, and many other areas.

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<sup>123</sup> Median ages of first marriage for men and women in 1960 – 23,21

Median ages of first marriage for men and women in 1999 – 27,25

<sup>124</sup> Percentage of first marriages described as “very happy” in 1976 – 54  
Percentage in 1996 – 38

<sup>125</sup> Number of cohabiting, unmarried couples in 1960: 439,000

Number in 1998: 4.2 million

<sup>126</sup> Percentage of Catholic and Protestant marriages that end in divorce after five years:20; Percentage of Jewish marriages that do: 40

(Psychology Today, January/February 2000, The States of Our Unions)

<sup>127</sup> Based on the NY Times, July, '02: In the 1990’s. Children living in single-parent households to an average of 51 percent from 64 percent. But, at the same time, there are a rising share of children, particularly black children in cities, are turning up in no-parent households, left with relatives, friends or foster families without either their mother or their father. Amongst those most affected by the welfare changes – black children in central cities – the shared living without their parents had more than doubled on average, to 16.1 percent from 7.5 percent, when researchers controlled for other factors.

Some blamed the increase on the new welfare laws.

Hispanic mothers were more likely to be married after welfare changes, and Hispanic children somewhat less likely to live in a single-parent home but no more likely to live without their parents.

The share of black children living with married parents had jumped to 38.9 percent in 2000 from 34.8 percent in 1995. However, there was a drop in the share of children under a year old living with married parents, to only 26 percent in 1999, from an already low 36 percent in 1997.

Overall, Census Bureau surveys indicate that the number of people in female-headed households declined to 27.4 million in 2000, from 29.2 million in 1995. But, the number mainly seems to reflect “doubling up and coupling up out of economic necessity, the way poor people have historically managed,” a pattern that includes leaving children with relatives.

<sup>128</sup> The number of married-couple families with children grew by just under 6 percent in the 1990’s. In contrast, households with children headed by single mothers, which account for nearly 7 percent of all households, increased by 25 percent in the 1990’s.

<sup>129</sup> Charles Murray wrote the following article in The Wall Street Journal, condensed in the Reader’s Digest (March 1994), Tomorrow’s Underclass:

Nearly 30 percent of all live births are of children born to unmarried mothers – about four percentage points higher than the black illegitimacy rate in the 1960s.

Meanwhile, illegitimacy has now reached 68 percent of all black births and often some 80 percent in inner cities.

White illegitimacy ... 22 percent ... White illegitimacy is overwhelmingly a lower-income phenomenon.

Black crime and dropouts from the labor force rose sharply as the overall black illegitimacy rate passed 25 percent.

The number of unmarried couples in the United States nearly doubled in the 1990's, to 5.5 million couples from 3.2 million in 1990. Some of those couples have children. The percentage of married-couple households with children under 18 declined to 23.5 percent of all households in 2000 from 25.6 percent in 1990, and from 45 percent in 1960. The number of Americans living alone, 26 percent of all households, surpassed, for the first time, the number of married-couple households with children.

Unmarried couples represent 9 percent of all unions, up from 6 percent a decade ago. The number of non-family households, which consist of people living alone or with people who are not related, make up about one-third of all households. They grew at twice the rate of family households in the 1990's.

Demographers pointed to several factors to explain the figures. People are marrying later, if they marry at all. The median age of the first marriage for men has increased to 27 years old from 22 in 1960; for women, it has increased to 25 years old from 20 in 1960. The booming economy has allowed for more younger people to leave home and live on their own. Divorce, while leveling off, has left many middle-aged people living alone. Advances in medicine and bulging stock portfolios have permitted many elderly people to live independently longer.<sup>130</sup>

Over fifty percent of American marriages end in divorce. Cohabiting first only makes divorce more likely.<sup>131</sup> Sixty percent of second marriages end in separation or divorce.<sup>132</sup> The median

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As white illegitimacy reaches critical mass, we should expect the deterioration to be as fast among low-income whites in the 1990s as it was among low-income blacks in the 1960s.

Illegitimacy is the single most important social problem of our time – more important than crime, drugs, poverty, illiteracy, welfare or homelessness.

Through thick walls of rewards and penalties, societies have historically constrained the overwhelming majority of births so they take place within marriage. In the past 30 years those walls have caved in. It is time to rebuild them.

<sup>130</sup> And live longer as well. Paul A. Laudicina, *World Out of Balance*: Soundview Executive Book Summaries, Vol. 27, No. 1, Part 1, Jan. 2005: ...What explains the phenomenon of global aging? The first factor is rising longevity, thanks to improvements in health care and better standards of living. Since WWII, average world life expectancy at birth has jumped from 45 years to 65 years – a higher gain in the last half century than in the previous 5,000 years. The second cause of global aging is declining birthrates. Instead of a population boom, there is actually a "baby bust" in countries and territories that today account for 44 percent of the world's population. Global birthrates have declined steadily since the early 1950s, when each woman had an average of five children. Today, the global fertility rate is 2.7. In developed countries, the average number of births per woman has fallen to 1.7 – far below the rate of 2.1 children per woman that maintains stable population size.

March 1, 1999, *The World Turns Gray*: Not long ago, experts worried not about how to finance a world going gray but about a cresting wave of kids. Worldwide...1972...5.6 children. Today, women on average have just half the number of children they did in 1972. In 61 countries, accounting for 44 percent of the Earth's population, fertility rates are now at or below replacement levels. Globally, the average life span has jumped from 49.5 years in 1972 to more than 63 years. Consequently, according to projections by the United Nations, the world's population will slowly increase at an average rate of 1.3 percent a year during the next 50 years, and it could decline by midcentury if fertility continues to fall. Next year, for the first time in history, people over 60 will outnumber kids 14 or younger in industrial countries. Even more startling, the population of the Third World, while still comparatively youthful, is aging faster than that of the rest of the world. In France, for example, it took 140 years for the proportion of the population age 65 or older to double from 9 percent to 18 percent. In China, the same feat will take just 34 years. In Venezuela, 22. "The developed world at least got rich before it got old," notes Neil Howe, an expert on aging. "In the Third World the trend is reversed." And that means trouble. For one thing, the cost of supporting a burgeoning elderly population will place enormous strains on the world's economy. Instead of there being more workers to support each retiree—as was the case while birthrates were still rising—there will be fewer. In Spain, she says, the Roman Catholic prohibition against birth control is now widely ignored. Another key factor is the incorporation of a majority of women into the work force. The Czech Republic, Romania, and Bulgaria all are producing children at a rate of just 1.2 per woman. Germany, Japan, Greece, Russia, Portugal, Hungary, and Ukraine have similar fertility rates. American women...two children each.

<sup>131</sup> One out of three couples who don't cohabit before marriage get divorced, and three out of four couples who do cohabit first get divorced (McManus, p.23). One out of three couples who don't cohabit before marriage get divorced, and three out of four couples who do cohabit first get divorced (McManus, p.23).

<sup>132</sup> Weiner-Davis, p.13

length of an American marriage in 1988 was seven years, with two out of ten marriages ending before the third anniversary.<sup>133</sup> Meanwhile, many of the marriages which do last are no tea party either. Over 20 percent of American couples hit, shove, slap, or push each other at least once a year.<sup>134</sup> In a large study, half of all American newlyweds had significant marital problems due to unexpected changes in their lives and relationships, even though 85 percent of these couples had had premarital sex and 54 percent had lived together before marriage. They reported a dramatic increase in the number of arguments they had and the tendency to criticize each other after marriage.<sup>135</sup> Forty percent of American children will have divorced parents by the time they are eight years old, and half will see a second pair of parents divorced by the time the children leave high school.<sup>136</sup>

Divorce rates are now climbing steeply amongst older people as well.<sup>137</sup> Divorces take place for many reasons.<sup>138</sup> Economic trends make divorce more palatable.<sup>139</sup> Therapists are quicker to counsel divorce,<sup>140</sup> and state laws have made them simple to obtain.

There is a wide gap between what is happening in the world, and what people believe should be happening. Despite a 50% divorce rate, most people expect to remain married for the rest of their lives.<sup>141</sup> Despite the increasing trend away from having children, most people believe that those with children lead richer, happier lives.<sup>142</sup> Despite the perception that faithfulness to one's partner has been eroded, especially after former President Clinton set the example,<sup>143</sup> most believe that this is wrong. Despite the fact that more and more children are born out of wedlock, this is not what the majority believes in. Yet, millions of those same people sat

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<sup>133</sup> McManus, p.105

<sup>134</sup> Notarius and Markman, p.20

<sup>135</sup> McManus, p.146

<sup>136</sup> Notarius and Markman, p.21

<sup>137</sup> The dislocations of retirement shake apart some marriages. Couples who move to another state often leave behind family, friends and the social-support system that got them through difficult times. Retirement also means an end to the activities that give structure to people's lives - and give husbands and wives an escape from one another.

<sup>138</sup> A 1989 Gallup poll showed that 47 percent of divorces were attributed to "incompatibility"; 16 percent to alcohol or drug abuse; 17 percent to infidelity; 10 percent to arguments over money, family, or children; and 5 percent to physical abuse (McManus, p.123).

<sup>139</sup> Still, .22 percent of divorced female retirees live in poverty, defined as an income below \$7,990 a year for someone 65 or older.

<sup>140</sup> Sometimes the professionals seem eager to denigrate their clients' commitment to marriage. "Women have an incredible amount of hope," says Mary Maracedk, a counselor at the oldest women's shelter in Massachusetts. "We want them to get over the hope that the ideal marriage may still come out of it." Yet a hopeful woman, trying to make a go of a not-so-good marriage, is not always a fool.

<sup>141</sup> NY Times Poll, April 2000

43. If you got married today, would you expect to stay married for the rest of your life, or not?

1. Yes	86%
2. No	11
9. NS/Ref	3

<sup>142</sup> NYT poll, April 2000:

15. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Most people who have children lead richer lives than do people without children?

1. Agree	63%
2. Disagree	29
9. NS/Ref	8

<sup>143</sup> President Clinton survived a sex-and-lies scandal when the Senate refused to remove him from office last February despite his affair with former intern Monica Lewinsky and his impeachment by the House. Other famous adulteries include FDR and Lucy Mercer, Marilyn Monroe and John (and maybe Robert) Kennedy, John F. Kennedy and (fill in the blank), Ingrid Bergman and Roberto Rosellini, Prince Charles and Camilla Parker-Bowles (Newsweek, Dec. 1999).

glued to the TV to watch the ultimate trivialization of marriage – total strangers willing to marry each other, on TV, for their money and good looks.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Based on The NY Times (February 17, 2000 ) & Washington Post Thursday, February 24, 2000, U.S. News & World Report, March 13, 2000:

On the Fox broadcasting network called “Who Wants to Marry a Multimillionaire?”, would-be brides competed to be chosen by a multimillionaire, a total stranger to them, and culminated in an on-the-air wedding presided over by a Nevada judge. 22.8 million viewers watched the show. In its final half-hour, the show drew more than a third of all women younger than 35 watching TV Tuesday night.

One widespread reaction to the show’s format was a revulsion – the kind that apparently helps, not hurts, ratings – that women had agreed to marry themselves off to an unknown man on a television show.

Although many women complained that the show reinforced stereotypes of women desperate to be married, the Fox Web site ([www.whowantstomarry.com](http://www.whowantstomarry.com)) was so flooded with requests from women to be on the next edition of “Multimillionaire” that it crashed yesterday afternoon. But Mike Darnell, the Fox executive who created the show, defended the concept, saying he planned to do another show “the other way around,” with a female millionaire choosing a husband.

The winner, Darva Conger who married Rick Rockwell exactly one commercial break after meeting him, said that she disliked the big galoot at first sight, thought he was inconsiderate to kiss her on the lips in front of millions of viewers after they had wed and never had any intention of consummating their marriage because they were, after all, strangers. She plans to dump him but is going to hang on to her new SUV and other wedding trophies – except for the \$35,000 ring, which she said she plans to part with.

Darva stated that her intentions had been “pure.” That is to say, she only went on “Who Wants to Marry a Multi-Millionaire?” because she wanted to take a “paid holiday” – paid by Fox, that is – in Las Vegas and to “be on TV and wave to my mom and my family and friends.” Sure, she got legally wed to Ricky Rocky – she never considered herself really married because she’s a “Christian woman, which means if I’m not married in a church with a preacher, I am not married before God and I am not married in my heart.”

Fox’s fiasco with the wedding special has turned into a windfall for rival networks’ news organizations, which swept the ratings with interviews of the now divorced couple. It turned out that husband Rick had a sordid past that included a restraining order for allegedly abusing a former girlfriend.

“We have taken one of humankind’s greatest accomplishments – technology – and used it to allow ourselves to slosh around in a sinkhole of mire,” says Stuart Fischhoff, Professor of Media Psychology at Cal State Los Angeles.

### *vii- Sexual permissiveness*

The sexual revolution of the 60's was enabled by effective and safe contraception and a broad relaxation of the firm moralities that had marked the 50's. The result was a period of great turbulence in both personal and public lives. Contraception sharply reduced the possible consequences of pre-, extra-, and post-marital sex. Censorship of public and artistic dialogue about sexual experience was dropped<sup>145</sup>.

Despite the pill, there was an astonishing surge in the number of single mothers.<sup>146</sup> There was also a rapid and wholly unprecedented extension of legal abortion where that would have been unthinkable in the 1950's. The Pill in 1960, Roe v. Wade in 1973.<sup>147</sup>

The U.S.A. really began its sexual revolution at about the turn of the century. In the latter part of the 19th Century, although there were the beginnings of greater openness towards sexuality, these were generally seen as breaches by less moral members of society. Pornographic literature, even immodest postcards, were routinely confiscated, and their distributors often arrested. Many factors contributed to the liberalization of this attitude, including the introduction of electricity. This allowed for a new night life but also for penny arcades and nickelodeons where many of the showings began to show dancing, nudity and kissing.

As people began to urbanize, country girls who grew up in more protected households began to be exposed to a more open society. Up until then, there was an accepted etiquette. Until then, in polite society, a man would not dare call upon a girl unless the woman had indicated interest. Kissing in public was bad form. Expressions of affection were for "private delectation."

But crowded apartments filled with working men and women or families, prevalent at the time, were not designed to shelter the innocent. The streets beckoned. The young flocked to the vast new temples of public entertainment – dime museums, vaudeville, penny arcades, amusement parks, baseball stadiums, dance halls, peep shows, and listening rooms. Technology created a new kind of voyeurism as Americans stood hunkered over kinoscopes and projectoscopes. The new amusements were intoxicating and, some feared, addicting. Newspapers carried stories about "nickel madness."

The amusements seemed to point toward a new world built on pleasure. Sex was in the air itself. One observer visiting a Yiddish music hall remarked, "The songs are suggestive of everything but what is proper, the choruses are full of double meanings and the jokes have broad and unmistakable hints of things indecent."

A group of physicians called the Committee of Fifteen issued a tome called The Social Evil. It described a young man drawn to the city by opportunity, who postponed or abandoned the expectation of marriage. "His interests center almost wholly in himself. He is responsible to no one but himself," they wrote. "The pleasures that he may obtain from day to day become the chief end of his life. A popular philosophy of hedonism furnishes him with a theoretical justification for the inclinations that are developed by the circumstances in which he is placed. It is not unnatural then that the strongest native impulse of man should find expression in the only way open to it – indulgence in vice."

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<sup>145</sup> Theorists like Wilhelm Reich, Michel Foucault, Fritz Perls and Paul Goodman saw promiscuous sexual behavior as a desirable stimulus to the emancipation of society from the restrictive life Freud had explored.

<sup>146</sup> In fact, in industrial countries, presently around one-third of babies are born to them.

<sup>147</sup> Adapted from Lionel Tiger in the NY Times, March 19, 2000

But there was no doubt that the sexual revolution took a giant leap in the 60's. A 1999 study found that aging baby boomers are much more tolerant of pre-marital relations and more willing to experiment than folks from previous generations.<sup>148</sup>

Things continued to decline in terms of sexual mores throughout the next three decades into the 90's. A major contributor was the media. By the end of the century, John Leo was to comment:<sup>149</sup>

*Bennett is right to call this a "race to the bottom." The 1998 gross-out movie *There's Something About Mary* showed that amazingly vulgar sex comedies could make a ton of money. But the bawdy bodily-function comedies are relatively harmless, compared with the wall-to-wall sex of current sitcoms and "teen angst" prime-time soap operas. The dominant plot line of these shows, as columnist Robert Samuelson wrote, is that being a grown-up means thinking exclusively about sex.*

*In the old days, the *Brady Bunch* never thought about sex, as far as we knew. Their modern counterparts on TV never think about anything else. A few years ago, nobody would have dared to put this stuff on the tube. Now it's becoming standard fare.*"<sup>150</sup>

The consequences of this revolution are vast, among them about 8 million Americans – most of them women and most of them young – suffering from anorexia, in which they starve themselves, or from bulimia, in which they gorge and purge.<sup>151</sup>

Around the turn of the century, the *New York Times* reported that while there has been a decline in the teenage pregnancy rate resulting from the increased use of contraception and a leveling off of sexual activity among teenagers,<sup>152</sup> half the men questioned reported having relations for the first time by age 17 and half the women by age 16. Still, many who became sexually active in their early or mid-teens later had regrets about starting so young.<sup>153</sup>

Each year in the United States, about three million teenagers acquire a sexually transmitted disease. One-fifth of the people diagnosed with AIDS are in their 20's, and most were infected as teenagers. Each year nearly one million teenage girls get pregnant.

Reasons for the falling age at which first intercourse occurs has to do with exposure to sexual images through the media. "Social and peer pressure, and the portrayal of sex is glamorous,

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<sup>148</sup> According to the report, 36 percent of women aged 45-59 said people should not have a sexual relationship outside marriage, compared with 66 percent opposed among women 75 and older.

<sup>149</sup> Adapted from *U.S. News & World Report*, 27 Sep, 1999

<sup>150</sup> Leo continued: These shows are also carriers of heavy cultural messages, the most obvious being that parents are fools. In the teen soap operas, parents are absent, stupid, irrelevant, zanily adulterous, on the lam, or in jail. The unmistakable message is that kids are on their own, with no need to listen to parents, who know little or nothing anyway. This helps the TV industry certify teenagers as an autonomous culture with its own set of ethics and consumption patterns.

<sup>151</sup> Jane E. Brody, *Private Hell of Eating Disorders* in *The NY Times*. According to a survey by the Mayo Clinic, the incidence of eating disorders has risen by 36 percent every five years since the 1950s.

<sup>152</sup> Teenage pregnancy rates are much higher in the United States, twice as high as in England and in Canada and nine times as high as in Japan.

<sup>153</sup> Now older and wiser, 54 percent of the women and 16 percent of the men said they should have waited longer before engaging in relations, and among the women whose first sexual experiences occurred before age 16, 70 percent said they wished they had waited. According to the findings of a study done in New Zealand, which were published in January in the *British Medical Journal*, 13 percent of the men who first had intercourse before age 16 contracted a sexually transmitted disease, compared with 6 percent of those who waited longer to initiate sexual activity. Among the women, the comparable figures were 28 percent and 12 percent.

pleasurable and adult[-like], while negative consequences and the responsibilities involved in sexual relationships are seldom portrayed.”<sup>154</sup>

Virginity may no longer be the prize it once was. Nor does having an abortion or bearing a child out of wedlock carry the stigma it used to.

Lest you think that girls who have sex do so because they find it irresistible, in a 1992 national survey, 25 percent of them said that their experience was “voluntary but unwanted.”

Perspectives disclosed that girls who have relations at an early age, as well as those who fail to use contraceptives and those who have children, tend to be depressed, have low self-esteem and possess little sense of control over their lives. Thus, reducing the incidence of early and risky sexual activity may require giving girls a reason to be hopeful and an opportunity to believe in themselves and their ability to make something of their lives.

Yet, the very opposite appears to be taking place. We can no longer talk in terms of someone, say, defiling a virgin, so instead we punish the virgin for having any feelings at all. Today modesty is commonly associated with sexual repression, with pretending that you don’t want sex though you really do.<sup>155</sup>

Many children these days know far too much too soon, and as a result they end up, in some fundamental way, not knowing – stunted and cut off from all they could be. If you are not taught that you “really” want just sex, you end up seeking much more. The peculiar way our culture tries to prevent young women from seeking more than “just sex,” the way it attempts to rid us of our romantic hopes or, variously, our embarrassment and our “hangups,” is a very misguided effort.<sup>156</sup>

Many high school girls find themselves sexually harassed, verbally and physically, a phenomenon that has become almost acceptable and maybe even expected.<sup>157</sup> The number of girls who simply cannot face what is happening to them in school is on the rise<sup>158</sup> (“School refusers”).<sup>159</sup> Some girls so dread returning to school that they cannot concentrate on homework.<sup>160</sup>

Wendy Shalit reports: *For some reason, no one connects this kind of harassment and early sex education. But to me the connection was obvious from the start, because the boys never teased me – they assumed I didn’t know what they were referring to. Whenever they would start to tease me, they always stopped when I gave them a confused look and said, “I have no idea what you guys are talking about. I was in the library.” Even though I usually did know what they were talking about, the line still worked, and they would be almost apologetic: “Oh, right – you’re the weirdo who always goes to the library.” And they would pass me by*

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<sup>154</sup> In a currently popular movie, “Slums of Beverly Hills,” a precocious 13-year-old decides to have sex with an older boy “just to get it over with.”

<sup>155</sup> Wendy Shalit: A Return to Modesty; Discovering the Lost Virtue

<sup>156</sup> Wendy Shalit: A Return to Modesty; Discovering the Lost Virtue

<sup>157</sup> In 1993 more than 4,200 school-age girls reported to *Seventeen* magazine that “they have been pinched, fondled or subjected to sexually suggestive remarks at school, most of them ... both frequently and publicly.” Researchers from Wellesley College, following up on the magazine’s survey, found “that nearly two-fifths of the girls reported being sexually harassed daily and another 29 percent said they were harassed weekly. More than two-thirds said the harassment occurred in view of other people. Almost 90 percent were the target of unwanted sexual comments or gestures.” School officials do very little about this, the study also found. One 13-year-old girl from Pennsylvania told them: “I have told teachers about this a number of times; each time nothing was done about it.”

<sup>158</sup> Mary Pipher in *Reviving Ophelia*

<sup>159</sup> Pipher concludes that the harassment that girls experience in the 1990s is “much different in both quality and intensity” from the teasing she received as a girl in the late fifties.

<sup>160</sup> Wendy Shalit: A Return to Modesty; Discovering the Lost Virtue

*and begin to torture the next girl, who they knew had been in class with them and could appreciate all the new put-downs they had learned.”<sup>161</sup>*

Sex education is beginning younger and younger, is becoming quite explicit, and is designed to remove all shame from the act.<sup>162</sup> And yet, as they confidently promote all this early sex education, our school officials are at a loss when it comes to dealing with the new problem of sodomy-on-the-playground. It’s gotten to a point where it is hard to keep up with all the sexual assault cases that plague our public schools in any given month.<sup>163</sup>

The associative link between the disenchantment of sex and increased sexual brutality among children works like this: if our children are raised to believe, in the words of that New Jersey kindergarten teacher, that talking about the most private things is “no different from talking about an elbow,” then they are that much more likely to see nothing wrong in certain kinds of sexual violence. What’s really so terrible, after all, in making someone touch or kiss your elbow?<sup>164</sup>

Shalit notes several problems regarding such sex education at so young an age. Firstly she comments that her generation’s sex education ended around the time that natural desire usually begins. “I guess the theory is that this way we know everything before we start, and can do it properly, but I think what happens instead is that we end up starting before we feel, because we think it’s expected of us.” Secondly, Shalit points out, the concept of embarrassment, a natural, inborn sensitivity, is smothered.

Today, embarrassment is something to “overcome,” but ... [perhaps] if so many girls are still embarrassed, even in an age when we’re not “supposed” to be, ... we have our embarrassment for a reason.

*Children now are urged to overcome their “inhibitions” before they have a clue what an inhibition means. Yet embarrassment is actually a wonderful thing, signaling that something very strange or very significant is going on, that some boundary is being threatened – either by you or by others. Without embarrassment, kids are weaker: more vulnerable to pregnancy, disease, and heartbreak.*

If “overcoming your embarrassment” is the first mantra of sex education, “taking responsibility for your sexuality” is the second. The health guidelines for the ninth grade in

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<sup>161</sup> Wendy Shalit: A Return to Modesty; Discovering the Lost Virtue

<sup>162</sup> Wendy Shalit reports: Sex education instructors in Massachusetts, New York, and Toronto teach the kids “Condom Line-Up,” where boys and girls are given pieces of cardboard to describe sex ... and then all the kids have to arrange themselves in the proper sequence. New Jersey’s *Family Life* program begins its instruction about birth control, masturbation, abortion, and puberty in kindergarten. Ten years ago, when the program was first instituted, there was some discomfort because according to the coordinator of the program, Claire Scholz, “some of our kindergarten teachers were shy – they didn’t like talking about scrotums and vulvas.” But in time, she reports, “they tell me it’s no different from talking about an elbow.” In another sex-ed class in Colorado, all the girls were told to pick a boy in the class and practice putting a condom on his finger. Schools in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, get a head start on AIDS instruction, teaching it in second grade, four years earlier than state requirements. In Orange County, Florida, second graders are taught about birth, death and drug abuse, and sixth graders role-play appropriate ways of showing affection. “I think that’s too young,” said one parent, Steve Smith. He would prefer his kids to “be learning about reading and writing.” New York City Board of Education guidelines instruct that kindergartners are to be taught “the difference between transmissible and nontransmissible diseases; the terms HIV and AIDS; [and] that AIDS is hard to get.” This, we are informed, fulfills “New York State Learner Outcomes: 1,2.”

<sup>163</sup> The New York Daily News in 1997: Four Bronx boys – the oldest only 9 – ganged up on a 9-year-old classmate and sexually assaulted her in a schoolyard, police charged yesterday ... [The girl’s mother] said she is furious with Principal Anthony Padilla, who yesterday told parents the attack never happened. The girl’s parents and sisters are also outraged that when the traumatized third-grader told a teacher, she was merely advised to wash out her mouth and was given a towel wipe.”

<sup>164</sup> Wendy Shalit: A Return to Modesty; Discovering the Lost Virtue

the Newton, Massachusetts, public schools, printed in the Student Workbook for Sexuality and Health, inform us that not only do “Sexually healthy adolescents ... decide what is personally ‘right’ and act on these values,” but also they “take responsibility for their own behavior.” Grown-ups get the same advice. “What does undermine feminism is women ... refusing to take responsibility for their sexuality,” says Karen Lehrman. “Every woman must take personal responsibility for her sexuality,” warns Camille Paglia.

“Fine,” contends Shalit, “but if you’re a child, you’re not sure what taking responsibility for your sexuality entails. I certainly didn’t want not to be taking responsibility for something, whatever it was.”

As is the nature of things which have gone too far, there are occasional swingbacks, but never to where things were before. An example of this took place during the nineties.<sup>165</sup>

Teen pregnancies dropped as a result of abstinence and contraceptive usage and attitudes changed significantly. Surveys by Yankelovich Partners Inc. showed that 44 percent of women think divorce should be harder to get, and 52 percent oppose distribution of condoms in schools.<sup>166</sup> Today, only 37 percent of Americans think premarital sex is acceptable (32 percent of women, 43 percent of men), and only 20 percent approve of relations among teenagers. In the UCLA survey, a record low of only 39.6 percent of students (down from 51.9 percent in 1987) agreed that “if two people really like each other, it’s all right for them to have sex even if they’ve known each other for a very short time.” Young people are also taking relationships more seriously.<sup>167</sup>

There were several causes for the change in statistics: First, as more people in the nineties became religious, their attitudes toward sex became more conservative.<sup>168</sup> In addition, voluntary workshops taught teenagers how to refuse to become sexually active without becoming alienated from their peer groups.<sup>169</sup>

Evaluating the present statistics, J. Walker Smith of Yankelovich stated that the family unit is on the decline, but the desire for family satisfaction is on the rise.

Today, in one school out of three, American teenagers are not just encouraged to abstain from sex, they are taught that abstinence is the only appropriate option.<sup>170</sup> These “abstinence-only”

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<sup>165</sup> Support for premarital sex dropped from 80 percent in 1988 to 71 percent in 1995. Over the same period, the percentage of males age 17 to 19 who have had sex fell 7 points to 68 percent.

<sup>166</sup> A poll conducted by the Center for Gender Equality

<sup>167</sup> Smith says researchers are picking up a rising reaction against the trend of dropping dating in favor of “hooking up” – typically teens or college students going out in groups, maybe drinking a lot, then pairing off for sex. Amy Holmes, of the Independent Women’s Forum, is pushing a “Take Back the Date” movement to stamp out the aimless sex of “hooking up.”

<sup>168</sup> The Wattleton survey found that 75 percent of the women polled said religion is very important in their lives, up from 69 percent two years ago. A study of young urban males by the Urban Institute found that the growing trend toward less permissive sexual attitudes in the 1990s is associated with religious beliefs. The number of religious teens didn’t rise, but the teens who were religious developed more conservative values. In a hypothetical case of pregnancy involving an unmarried couple, the percentage of males who endorsed having the baby and supporting it rose steadily from 19 percent in 1979 to 59 percent in 1995. Taken from John Leo in *U.S. News and World Report*, 3/1/99

<sup>169</sup> Programs like two developed by Girls Inc., Growing Together and Will Power/Won’t Power have proved effective in delaying sexual activity among young girls. Growing Together involves five two-hour mother-daughter workshops designed to foster communications about sexuality and other sensitive issues. Will Power/Won’t Power is an assertiveness training program to help teenagers refuse to become sexually active without jeopardizing their friendships with peers of both sexes. Both programs explore the opportunities life holds and help the girls realize what they may lose by becoming pregnant.

<sup>170</sup> A survey conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation, asked secondary school principals about their sex-ed programs and found 34 percent had abstinence-only as the main message. Similar results were found by the Alan Guttmacher Institute.

policies teach students that they should wait until marriage, or at least until they are older, to have sex. The policies leave out any discussion of birth control to prevent pregnancy or transmission of HIV and other diseases – except to talk about the shortcomings of such approaches. Most other schools opt for “abstinence-plus” programs that discourage sex but suggest use of contraception for students who choose to have it anyway.<sup>171</sup>

Abstinence has long been promoted by conservative and religious groups who argue that talking about birth control sends teenagers a mixed message, suggesting that premarital sex is really OK. The welfare overhaul legislation that President Clinton signed in 1996 included a five-year, \$250 million program for abstinence-only programs.

Fifteen states require that schools teach abstinence until marriage, and 13 require lessons about contraception. Some require both. Most schools incorporate a discussion of both abstinence and birth control.<sup>172</sup> While there was no net increase in the number of districts with abstinence-only policies, many districts moved from a policy that made no value judgment about abstaining from sex to one that promotes abstinence as the preferred option.

Research about the effectiveness of abstinence-only programs has been inconclusive, partly because they have not been around long enough to allow for rigorous research.

Some advocates of abstinence-only education harbor fears that “sex education” is a thinly veiled excuse to distribute pro-sex, free-love propaganda to unwitting students. On the other hand, many of those who favor a more inclusive attitude toward sex education (one that includes discussion of contraceptives) worry that abstinence-only programs will condemn students to disease and pregnancy. Most abstinence classes don’t deny human sexuality. In fact, the classes acknowledge the power of the human sex drive and provide young people with ways of dealing with peer pressure and dating in order to remain abstinent.<sup>173</sup>

Furthermore, most studies find that knowledge about AIDS or HIV does not decrease risky behavior.<sup>174</sup> While some, like Alexander Sanger,<sup>175</sup> are still of the opinion that “*Sex Ed Is More Than Just Saying No: Teens Need All The Facts*”, this is highly questionable. In fact, Shalit strongly rebuffs Sanger’s claim: “How does Alexander Sanger imagine he was born, if his parents were never given “the facts?” I am sure he intends no harm, but the ground in dispute was never whether we would get the facts – the question is how and when. Do we get the opportunity to seek out the facts when we are ready? Furtively? Or do we have them forced upon us when we’re not ready, when we’re inclined to yawn about the whole thing and conclude it’s no big deal? It’s really not very complicated why so many kids are getting pregnant these days, now that we have so much sex education on top of a wholly sexualized culture. It’s because sex is not a big deal to them and because they think this is what they are expected to do. They are just trying to be normal kids, to please people like Alexander Sanger and prove that they are “sexually healthy.”“

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<sup>171</sup> CNN December 14, 1999 – Washington (AP)

<sup>173</sup> *Time* – Dec. 17, 1999:

<sup>174</sup> A 1988 study in the *American Journal of Public Health*, which examined exactly the year when public health information about AIDS grew, found that no increased condom use among San Francisco’s sexually active adolescents resulted. A 1992 study in *Pediatrics* conducted a broader investigation and ended up warning, “It is time to stop kidding ourselves into thinking that our information-based preventative actions are enough or are effective.” This shouldn’t be so surprising. The few studies that show that instruction on condom use changes the behavior of students conclude it is only likely to make them more sexually active. This cult of taking responsibility for your sexuality is essentially a call to action.

<sup>175</sup> Alexander Sanger, President of Planned Parenthood of New York City, in an Op-Ed in the *New York Daily News*, 1997.

### viii- *Alternative lifestyles/homosexuality*

The Torah prohibited homosexuality for males and females<sup>176</sup> despite its general acceptance in the broader society over most of history. Throughout a great deal of Biblical times and all the way through to the Roman era, homosexuality was rampant. Sodom had marriage contracts for homosexuals<sup>177</sup> (from which the word Sodomy comes),<sup>178</sup> Cham committed this act on his father Noach,<sup>179</sup> and Potifar acquired Yosef in order to commit such acts with him.<sup>180</sup> In certain parts of the world, special takanos were made to prevent Jews from committing such acts.<sup>181</sup>

Homosexuality was prohibited by the Torah for a variety of reasons. Some of these are:

- The sanctity of children – the mitzvah of Pru U'Revu.
- The sanctity of marriage and of marriage being the only viable vehicle for bringing up children.
- The first Adam was divided into male and female. Therefore, only male and female can recreate that unity of Adam. Two same sexed people will always remain two people.
- The mitzvos come to transform us.
- The slippery slope: There are already pushes being made to legitimize all other sexual and relationship taboos.

The Torah rejects the homosexual act, while requiring sympathy and support for the homosexual struggling with his orientation. Neither the community nor the homosexual as a person should define him by his orientation, this being only one aspect of a rich multi-faceted person.

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<sup>176</sup> רמב"ם פכ"א מהל' איסורי ביאה הל' ח : נשים המסוללות זו בזו (מתחככות משום תאות תשמיש – פירוש רש"י על מס' שבת סה). אסור וממעשה מצרים הוא שהוזהרנו עליו שנאמר כמעשה ארץ מצרים וכו' לא תעשו (ויקרא יח) ואמרו חכמים (תו"כ פ' אחרי') מה היו עושים איש נושא איש ואשה נושאה אשה ונשאת לשני אנשים. אע"פ שמעשה זה אסור אין מלקין עליו שאין לו לאו מיוחד והרי אין שם ביאה כלל. לפיכך אין נאסרות לכהונה משום זנות ולא תיאסר אשה על בעלה בזה שאין כאן זנות. וראוי להכותן מכת מרדות הואיל ועשו איסור. וגו' (ובפ"ה"ם כתב דאין בו עונש לא מהתורה ולא מדרבנן) ומובא בשו"ע אה"ע ס"כ ט"ב.

Rambam and Shulchan Aruch say only that a woman who has engaged in lesbian activities is not assur to a Cohen. They do not address the issue of a Cohen Gadol directly (which the Shulchan Aruch would not address because it is not relevant in our time but the Rambam would have). There is, in fact one opinion in the Gemorrah (שהב"ב סה) that such a woman would be disqualified (מדרבנן) from marrying a Cohen Gadol.

בגמ' שם – פסולות לכהונה אבל רש"י ותוס' פירשו לכהונה גדולה דלאו בתולה שלימה היא. ולפי היש מפרשים (בתוספות לפי דעה זו פסולה אפילו לכהן הדיוט)

But the words of Rambam/Shulchan Aruch are:

אין נאסרת לכהונה כלל

implying that she is mutar even to a Cohen Gadol.

<sup>177</sup> בראשית רבה (כו' ה') רב הונא בשם רבי אמר דור המבול לא נימוחו מן העולם עד שכתבו גמומסיות (שטר כתובה ונישואין, ערוך) לזכר ולבהמה

<sup>178</sup> עובדת רשע של סדום (בראשית יט' ה') הי' במשכ"ז ומשם הגדרת מלת מעשה-סדום גם בשפה אנגלית (sodomy) והגדרה זו טבעית ברשעתו. גם פילגש בגבעה (שופטים יט') הי' עובדא של מעשה תועבה זאת, וכמעט נהרס שבט אחד שלם עקב עבירה זו. (Rabbi Shalom Kamenetsky)

<sup>179</sup> רש"י בראשית ט' כב בשם חז"ל

<sup>180</sup> (סוטה יג' ב') עה"כ בראשית (לט' א') שנענש פוטיפר בסירוס משום שקנה את יוסף למטרת משכ"ז.

<sup>181</sup> בקידושין (פב). רבנן לא אסרו שינת שני רווקין בטלית אחד משום שלא נחשדו ישראל על משכב זכר. אבל השו"ע, אבן העזר סי' כד' כתב שהגם שלא נחשדו ישראל, בדורות הללו שרבו הפריצים יש להתרחק מלהתייחד עם הזכר. וע"ש בח"מ ובב"ש בשם הב"ח, שתלוי בהמדינה, ועכ"ז, דווקא יחוד וכו', עיי"ש.

The Torah position does not negate the possibility that people may be born homosexual. Judaism accepts that the feelings of the homosexual are real for him. Moreover, we need to recognize that Orthodox and other homosexuals are often in great pain. Homosexuality must be faced as a challenge and a handicap like any other. Having to struggle with the message that homosexuality is acceptable makes it harder for the homosexual to face the real challenge. We are no longer faced with the clear message that homosexuality is prohibited by the Torah and something we therefore have to struggle against. Today, a person has to struggle with the idea that maybe he should be accepting who he is and live accordingly.

Some yetzers are never overcome. Some homosexuals will never overcome their issue. Conversion therapy helps for some, though not all homosexuals. This does not mean that the battle should not be fought.

Gay rights are flourishing in America because the broader social context lends itself to this. American values, such as tolerance, and personal autonomy, support such a move, and the breakdown of family (including the move away from having children) should have been an early warning signal that sooner or later we would reach the point of widespread acceptance of homosexuality. The lesson is that fighting the gay-agenda as an isolated issue, without addressing the values and issues supporting it, is symptomatic rather than cure-orientated treatment.

These include:

- The decline of marriage and the family.<sup>182</sup>
- The sexual liberation.
- Consenting adults are entitled to do what they want.
- People get to choose their private values.
- Gay people are an oppressed group in need of liberation.
- Gay people are born that way and therefore it must be natural.

In 1973 the American Psychiatric Association (APA) removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.<sup>183</sup> In June, 2003, the Supreme Court struck down criminal sodomy laws, reversing its 1986 decision in *Bowers v. Hardwick*, which held that the Constitution didn't guarantee the right to engage in "homosexual sodomy." Polls have consistently shown that the Americans are not yet ready for legalizing same-sex marriage, but around the world, the move towards same-sex marriage is hurtling on and, in 2003, there were two high profile cases of the appointment of a gay bishop in England and another in Boston.

### **Outside of the U.S.A.**

Today, the Netherlands and Belgium, and, to some degree Canada, recognize the union of same-sex couples. A law passed in France in 2000 made that country the first predominantly Roman Catholic nation to recognize homosexual unions.

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<sup>182</sup> *Gay marriage ... is the marriage debate. Losing it ... means losing marriage as a social institution, a shared public norm. Marriage will become (as it is in Sweden) a religious rite, with little public or social significance. ... The public purposes of marriage no longer include anything to do with making babies, or giving children mothers and fathers. .... As Evan Wolfson put it "What counts is not family structure, but the quality of dedication, commitment, self-sacrifice, and love in the household."*

<sup>183</sup> The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM)

In 2003, Belgium began registering gay partnerships. Germany, which also has a large Catholic population, grants gay couples protections, benefits and responsibilities traditionally reserved for married men and women. Similar measures are being considered in Britain.

Canada was the most recent addition, in June, 2003. The legislation immediately took effect in Ontario, which includes Toronto, after the province's highest court ruled that the previous federal marriage laws were discriminatory and therefore unconstitutional.<sup>184</sup> The old laws, the court declared, "offends the dignity of persons in same-sex relationships."

There was little organized opposition to such legislation, and public opinion polls show a solid majority were in favor of the change. To protect religious freedom, the cabinet decided that the planned federal legislation would allow religious institutions to refuse to conduct same-sex marriages.

The Canadian move is likely to have a much larger impact on the United States. Although Canada is usually ahead of the U.S.A. on social issues, nevertheless the U.S.A. usually follows the same trends or directions that are taken in Canada.<sup>185</sup>

The policy opens the way for same-sex couples from the United States and around the world to travel to Canada to marry, since Canada has no marriage residency requirements. Canadian marriage licenses have always been accepted in the United States.<sup>186</sup> In addition, gay-rights advocates in the United States are already declaring that Canada will serve as a vivid example to Americans that same-sex marriage is workable and offers no challenge to traditional heterosexual family life.

### **In the U.S.A.**

Although same-sex marriage is not supported by the majority of Americans, it has become politically acceptable to support gays with tax dollars and to show positive images of gays on TV. More disturbing is the gay sub-culture, which is overall highly promiscuous.

Most students of psychology and psychiatry are no longer even taught approaches to helping gays change their sexual orientation.

Amongst Jews, the Conservative and especially the Reform movements have come out solidly on the liberal side of the gay rights issue. The Reform movement has become an active advocate of gay rights in political and other circles, and now has a guide in the making of same-sex wedding ceremonies.

In August of 2003, the Episcopal Church elected a gay bishop to the Diocese of New Hampshire and received support from many liberal leading bishops and archbishops in the U.S.A., Canada, and Australia. While the Vatican remains solidly opposed to gay clergy or any gay behavior, many of its American constituents are not so sure of the issue.

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<sup>184</sup> Courts in British Columbia and Quebec have also struck down marriage laws, but gave governments until next year to rewrite their legislation.

The Ontario judgment goes further because it ordered Toronto's city clerk and the provincial registrar-general to issue and accept marriage licenses for two couples who wed in 2001 under an ancient Christian tradition that allowed them to avoid having to get city-issued licenses.

The court rejected the fear of religious groups that gay marriage infringes on religious freedom because it would force them to conduct ceremonies against their will.

<sup>185</sup> Adapted from the NY Times, Canadian Leaders Agree to Propose Gay Marriage Law, June 18, 2003, by Clifford Krauss

<sup>186</sup> By contrast, only a few American same-sex couples have taken advantage of expanded marriage laws in the Netherlands because of its long residency requirement, and Belgium will only allow marriages of foreign couples from countries that already allow such unions. But Canada is nearby and has no such restrictions.

Currently, the Defense of Marriage Act, signed by President Clinton in 1996, prohibits any federal recognition of gay marriage, meaning that benefits like those given under Social Security or to veterans may be claimed only by a surviving spouse of the opposite sex. In addition, the law relieves states of any obligation to recognize gay marriages performed in other states where they might be legal. This position is supported by President Bush.

However, the revolution will probably take place at a state level. No American state yet allows same-sex marriage, but Vermont has enacted a law providing for civil unions, which allow gay couples many of the benefits of marriage. Issues include adoption rights, inheritance, insurance benefits and matters as mundane as sharing health club memberships.

During the 2002 congressional elections, Nevada voters approved an amendment to their state constitution preemptively outlawing homosexual marriage before their state court could legalize it. It was the 36th state to do so. A similar amendment to the national constitution has been introduced in the House of Representatives, but has never been passed.

While certain states still have anti-sodomy laws, the courts are moving to strike them down.<sup>187</sup> Justice Antonin Scalia wrote the dissent, saying “If there’s no rational basis for prohibiting same-sex sodomy by consenting adults, then state laws prohibiting prostitution, adultery, bigamy, and incest are at risk.”

State legislation, ostensible protecting gays against discrimination, has sometimes gone as far as requiring that voluntary organizations accept gays who wish to join.<sup>188</sup> At other times, the courts have shown disapproval of the gay life-style.<sup>189</sup>

When President Bush stated that "studies have shown that the ideal is where a child is being raised by a man and a woman", The New York Times was careful to add that, "there is no scientific evidence that children raised by gay couples do any worse".

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<sup>187</sup> In 1986, in *Bower v. Hardwick* the Supreme Court ruled that the right to privacy does not give homosexuals the right to have sex in their own homes. Since then, the number of states with criminal sodomy laws has dropped from 24 to 13, with four (Texas, Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma) applying those laws solely to homosexuals. Gay-rights advocates say that even in states that ban sodomy between both same-sex and opposite-sex partners, the law is invoked almost exclusively against gays.

In 1998, the Alabama Supreme Court ruled that J.F.’s lesbian relationship with her live-in partner was “neither legal in this state, nor moral in the eyes of most of its citizens” and that she was therefore not as capable of raising her child as her remarried ex-husband.

Then on June, 26, 2003, the Supreme Court struck down a Texas law that forbids homosexual sex, making such a law invalid in all states.

<sup>188</sup> In October, 1999, the Supreme Court of the United States reviewed the decision of the Supreme Court of New Jersey which had upheld a state law compelling a Boy Scout troop to appoint an avowed homosexual and gay rights activist as an assistant scoutmaster. In briefs of the court, both Aguda and the OU argued that this abridges the First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and freedom of association. Although the New Jersey law contained a religious educational facility exception, this did not obligate other legislatures to provide a similar exception. The OU argued that the First Amendment’s guarantee included the right to determination of the form and content of the message to be expressed. By compelling the inclusion of those who dissent from the message, the NJ law is compelling the association to alter its expression.

<sup>189</sup> U.S. News & World Report, December 16, 2002

In 1998, the Alabama Supreme Court ruled that J.F.’s lesbian relationship with her live-in partner was “neither legal in this state, nor moral in the eyes of most of its citizens” and that she was therefore not as capable of raising her child as her remarried ex-husband.

The case could produce the most significant Supreme Court ruling on gay rights since 1986’s *Bower v. Hardwick*, in which a divided court ruled that the right to privacy does not give homosexuals the right to have sex in their own homes. Since then, the number of states with criminal sodomy laws has dropped from 24 to 13, with four (Texas, Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma) applying those laws solely to homosexuals. Gay-rights advocates say that even in states that ban sodomy between both same-sex and opposite-sex partners, the law is invoked almost exclusively against gays.

***ix- Civic responsibility and heroism***

Civic responsibility is a strong value which goes against much of the selfishness encouraged by many of the values described above. Many people who have believed deeply in things, such as abortion or black or women's rights, have given a great deal to fight for these things. Others are simply patriotic and caring of their country. Others have fought to clean up their neighborhoods or to save an endangered species.

*Reader's Digest* describes many of these in a section entitled "*Heroes for Today.*" Replacing the idea of the righteous person is the concept of a hero as a model for righteousness. To fight for something in America is indeed to be a hero.

Yet the three greatest types of heroes in America are movie stars, rock stars and sports stars. These are the ones asked for their autographs, idolized in the press, put on the ads and paid the highest fees when appearing at events. The average American knows that his life is not exemplary. His prestige lies more in a society that values the external over the internal. Therefore those whose job it is to appear in front of others and entertain them (with music, illusion or physical prowess) receive the greatest recognition.

However, this is not to say that none of the more noble types of idealism exist in America. The late 90's chronicled record levels of volunteering. The AmeriCorps program was inducting 25,000 volunteers annually; Teach for America receives 3,000 applications a year for 500 slots; some 10,000 apply to the Peace Corps for 3,500 places.

x- *Celebrities and heroes*<sup>190</sup>

John Leo in *U.S. News & World Report* 5/17/99 – *Repackaging the Perps*

Larry Flynt ... delivered a lecture at Georgetown University. ... Flynt's porno magazine, *Hustler*, is renowned for its racism and its degradation of women, while one of Flynt's daughters accused him of sexually abusing her. (He denied it.) To the surprise of no one, Flynt came out in favor of the constitutional amendment most often cited by pornographers – the first.

Allison Tepley, an official of the student lecture fund, defended the Flynt invitation on grounds that it would provoke dialogue and intellectual debate. She said she is personally a very strong opponent of pornography, “but I can't make a value judgment or decision without hearing the other side.” Flynt's 30-year career is enough to make most Americans throw up in unison, but Tepley couldn't make a value judgment.

Next thing you know, Georgetown will import some surviving Nazi official so its baffled students will finally be able to make up their minds about the Holocaust. Or maybe the Unabomber could lecture on environmental progress through postal explosions.

What attracted Georgetown and John Kennedy to Flynt in the first place? Likely answer: Because his life was made into a movie, much of Flynt's notoriety has been converted into celebrity, and celebrity washes away sins, even large ones like racism, the degrading of women, and allegations of incest. That's why Flynt drew a crowd two or three times larger than that of New York Governor George Pataki, who also spoke on campus that week. An unusually repulsive pornographer portrayed by Woody Harrelson is a far better attraction than a good but bland governor of a major state portrayed by himself.

Alas, we live in a culture dedicated to recycling the infamous as the famous. Short of murder, it's almost impossible for most perpetrators to stay disgraced for long<sup>191</sup>. Dick Morris survived his scandal, returned briefly as an informal adviser to the president, and is now a respected TV analyst and columnist offering moral and political judgments on the Clinton presidency. Whatever. Unapologetic figures in Republican-era political scandals like G. Gordon Liddy (Watergate) and Oliver North (Irangate) are media stars, too.

Marv Albert was in serious trouble with charges of forced oral sex and physical assault – not to mention the sexual threesomes and the cross-dressing – but within a year it was over. He is

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<sup>190</sup> Kim Clark wrote the following article in the *U.S. News & World Report*, August 20, 2001, *They're hard to find*: Nearly 1 out of 4 Americans has recently crossed somebody off a list of heroes, mostly because of “unethical conduct.” More than two thirds of all Americans who've lost respect for a hero said it was because the individual was overly concerned with personal recognition.

A-Rod, Madonna, and the Iron Chef – who may indeed have many admirable qualities – aren't ranked high in the public's mind as heroes. Instead, four out of Americans' five top heroes, aside from relatives are timeless favorites from history. Jesus Christ was the most widely admired hero, followed by Martin Luther King Jr., Secretary of State Colin Powell, John F. Kennedy, and Mother Teresa. There were also some surprising results: Former President Bill Clinton got more mentions than current President George W. Bush, even though about 5 percent of the respondents said they had knocked Clinton off their list because of immoral conduct.

*On May 20, 1961, President John F. Kennedy sent federal marshals to protect civil rights Freedom Riders from Southern white mobs. Five days later, he challenged Congress to send an American to the moon. That's the official record. Years later, journalists revealed that at the same time he was sneaking 27-year-old Judith Campbell into his private quarters for illicit sex. The FBI worried she was passing White House information to her “associate,” crime boss Sam Giancana.*

<sup>191</sup> Kenneth T. Walsh, *U.S. News & World Report*, April 10, 2000, *Springtime, and the smell of scandal*: The day Clinton was impeached, Al Gore called him one of the greatest presidents in history...

back doing national telecasts, and more fans than ever seem to want his autograph. One of the stars he covers, Latrell Sprewell, could have been banned from basketball for two violent assaults on his coach. Instead, he was just traded to New York.

Mike Milken is on the cover of *Business Week* (“*The Reincarnation of Mike Milken*”), smiling sweetly and juggling vegetables, his prison term and financial adventures of the 1980’s apparently forgotten. Al Sharpton, a racial arsonist and a chief perpetrator of the Tawana Brawley hoax, is back as a vaguely respectable civil rights activist leading protests in New York. Sydney Biddle Barrows, the “Mayflower Madam,” continues to cash in on her achievements in the sex industry. Before and after photos of her cosmetic surgery appeared in February in the otherwise elegant *Harper’s Bazaar*.

Amy Fisher, the “Long Island Lolita,” who shot her boyfriend’s wife in the face, gets out of jail this week. A friend suggests that after making the rounds of the TV talk shows, she may get a show of her own, aimed at the youth market. Why not? Or maybe she could lecture on ethics at Georgetown. After all, she’s already famous.

CNN December 11-12, 1999

Have pop icons replaced religion in the modern age? That’s the idea behind a new art exhibition at Liverpool’s Tate Gallery, which has at its center a statue of Princess Diana as the Virgin Mary. Today’s performers, royalty and fashion models “are adored as once were saints or angels,” a spokesperson for the museum told the London Independent. While the exhibit juxtaposes images of Michael Jackson (and his pet, Bubbles), female bodybuilders and Jesus Christ, it’s Luigi Baggi’s 15-foot-tall sculpture of the late Princess of Wales that has incited anger in some of the English. Anthony Kilmister, chairman of the Prayer Book Society, told Reuters: “The idea of Diana as the Virgin Mary is in appallingly bad taste.” The show, titled “*Heaven and Earth: An Exhibition That Will Break Your Heart*,” runs through Feb. 27. — B. J. Sigesmund.

Richard Morrison wrote the following article (edited and adapted) in *The Times* (England), December 14, 2000, *Memorabilia – the holy relics of our age*:

£15,000 someone paid back in 1990 for a glove that once belonged to Michael Jackson ... Jimi Hendrix’s waistcoat, which changed hands a few years ago for £24,000, or Margot Fonteyn’s tutu, which was sold ... £64,240 ...

George Michael ... paid £1.45 million for an upright piano whose ivories were once briefly tickled by John Lennon.

A handbag ... by Baroness Thatcher ... bought £100,00 ... John F. Kennedy’s golf clubs? Someone, somewhere thinks they are worth £550,000.

What we are dealing with here is the mind-warping, judgement-clouding power of hero-worship. Put an obsessed fan in close proximity to some trinket touched by his idol, and the object will start to exert the same pseudo-theological hold on him as the “holy relics” of the Middle Ages did on gullible pilgrims.

*xi- The media*

**a- Bias and fabricated stories**

In 1990, *Los Angeles Times* media critic David Shaw produced a four-part series on press coverage of the abortion issue. He essentially concluded that the American newsroom culture is so strongly pro-choice that it cannot bring itself to report the issue fairly. Even though the report was widely accepted in broader circles, this provoked no self-examination, no panel discussions. Journalists reacted as if the Shaw report had never happened.

In 2001, Bernard Goldberg wrote a book called *Bias*, documenting in detail the bias of the media against men, Jews and others, and in favor of certain groups. The book was a best-seller, selling well over ½ million copies. As John Leo pointed out, *Bias* is the first No. 1 nonfiction bestseller of modern times that failed to get a single minute on *CBS*, *NBC*, or *ABC*. The reason is simple. *Bias* critiques just these and other networks.

John Leo in *U.S. News & World Report*, July 6, 1998

The cases of Stephen Glass and Patricia Smith are being lumped together – two journalists caught lying by their employers, the *New Republic* and the *Boston Globe*.

The *New Republic* found that Glass had fabricated all or part of at least 27 of 41 articles he wrote for the magazine in the past 2½ years.

Smith, 42 who wrote a popular twice-weekly metro column for the *Boston Globe*, was asked to resign after admitting that she made up parts of four recent columns.

Like Glass, Smith wanted her writing to come across as exciting, “I wanted the pieces to jolt, to be talked about, to leave the reader indelibly impressed,” she wrote in her apology to readers, admitting that she sometimes quoted nonexistent people in order to “create the desired impact or slam home a salient point.”

The *Globe* ombudsman, Jack Thomas, took a sour view of this explanation. He wrote: “Although Smith’s column of apology was written with her customary flair, she continued to compromise the truth. Making up an entire column of fictitious people and fictitious quotations is not, as she would have us believe, slamming home a point. It’s lying.”

But Smith apparently doesn’t think of it as lying. She wrote: “I will survive this knowing that the heart of my columns was honest and heartfelt.” This is a somewhat ambiguous sentence, but it seems to be a claim that emotional truth (the stuff of fiction) justifies or excuses fictional techniques in a column. One media critic, Tom Rosenstiel of the *Project for Excellence in Journalism*, read Smith’s statement that way. “You get the sense reading her apology that she has the mentality of an artist who’s talking about the truth with a capital Y,” he said. “But journalism is fundamentally about nonfiction.”

What makes this interesting, is that so much journalism today has turned away from the old ideal of objectivity. Many reporters accepted the currently fashionable postmodern theory that objective knowledge of any sort is a myth. (A couple of years ago, I gave a speech at a convention of young journalists, and when I talked about the ideal of objectivity a mildly exasperated rumble of dissent swept through the room.)

The postmodernists put quotation marks around words like reality and push their disciples to embrace the principle of subjectivity. One of the teachings is that there is no fixed history – history is created in the minds of historians. It is what historians choose to make of the past. Journalism often seems to come under this heading, too. Since objectivity has been declared a

myth, journalism is inherently a subjective exercise in which the feeling and will of the journalist function to create the truth of what has just occurred.

“Throughout our culture,” the critic Michiko Kakutani writes, “the old notion of ‘truth’ and ‘knowledge’ are in danger of being replaced by the new ones of ‘opinion,’ ‘perception,’ and ‘credibility.’” At the least, we are living in a docudrama culture in which the techniques of fiction and nonfiction are beginning to blur. That’s why Patricia Smith’s defense of her emotional honesty is more alarming than the straightforward faking of Stephen Glass.

The following article appeared in the *Jerusalem Post*, July 12, 2002: In November 1925, [Margaret] Mead...<sup>192</sup> arrived in American Samoa. Mead, according to biographer Phyllis Grosskurth, was not interested in “socially unimportant adolescents”; her real interest lay more in collecting artifacts. ... In March 1926, intent on leaving Samoa early for France, and having done virtually no fieldwork on Boas’s project (all the while assuring him that her labors were “going nicely”), Mead turned to virtually the only Samoan girls she knew, Fa’amu and a companion named Fofoa, prodding them insistently with questions about sex. Though “embarrassed and offended” by her inquiries, the two girls decided to play along. They told Mead “everything she wanted to hear,” wrote *Scientific American* columnist Martin Gardner. “Yes, adolescents had complete sexual freedom, moving stress-free from childhood to adulthood; Samoans were a happy, free-love people. Poor Mead bought it all.” Coming of Age in Samoa, her blockbuster 1928 book, was by every measure an astonishing fabrication. Mead claimed to have learned Samoan: she had not. She claimed to have drawn her conclusion from a sample of 66 subjects: the sample number was closer to two. As to her depiction of Samoans as sexual libertines ... the truth was starkly opposite. Yet facts tend to count for little when they stand in the way of desire, belief, or ideology. Coming of Age in Samoa descended on a public eager for its message of sexual liberation and cultural relativism. “Back to the South Sea Isles,” exulted Samuel Schmalhausen in 1929. “Back to naturalness and simplicity and sexual joy.”<sup>193</sup>

James Poniewozik wrote the following article in *Time Magazine*, December 25, 2000 – January 1, 2001, *Down By Law*:

In December, 2000, the Supreme Court delivered its 65-page verdict in *Bush vs. Gore*. The Judges decided not to allow a recount of the vote. The decision was placed into the waiting hands of reporters, who could not immediately tell what the 65 page document was actually saying until they had taken the time out to read it in full. But the networks decided to guess anyhow. Most networks guessed wrong, implying that Gore might pull off a new recount.

The networks botched the call of Florida twice. This was their last, best chance to get it right. So they applied what they learned from November. Namely, nothing. Again, they chose being fast over necessarily being right. And this time they didn’t even have the excuse of bad data. The answer was in their chilly little hands; they just decided not to digest it before reporting. In general, they pulled off a remarkable feat of deadline analysis. Thing is, that

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<sup>192</sup> Margaret Mead (1901-1978) was probably the best known and most influential cultural anthropologist of the 20th century. In November 1925, at the behest of her mentor, the German-Jewish anthropologist Franz Boas, Mead arrived in American Samoa for what was intended to be a nine-month study of "the life of Samoan girls," particularly their "sexual life and any philosophical conflicts." (Bret Stephens's *Eyes Abroad: Sex, lies and self-determination*: July 2002)

<sup>193</sup> In 1983, Freeman published Margaret Mead in Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth. Freeman, who spoke Samoan fluently and had studied the islanders for more than 40 years, was not so easy to dismiss. Today, Mead’s academic reputation lies in tatters. (But) not so the cultural and political movements she helped spawn.

used to be what you did after you absorbed the facts. The supreme chaos was testimony to TV news's inability to utter three little words: "We don't know."

**b- Non-factual reporting of biases**

John Leo in *U.S. News & World Report* 11/22/99:

... Bias stories are now a staple of modern journalism. No big-city daily seems willing to go to press without two or three, whether serious and valid or not. Recent entries include obituary bias (too many men, not enough women), pizza-delivery bias (Domino's asks customers in high-crime areas to meet the deliveryman at the curb), anti-Muslim bias in New York City regulations on street vendors ("They want to put you out of business because you're Muslims, because you're Egyptians."), bias in federal nutrition policy (milk shouldn't be recommended because some minorities are lactose intolerant), and anti-Italian-American bias (no apology for mistreated Americans of Italian descent during World War II).

Disparities of all kinds are reported as presumable evidence of bias of some sort. Under this heading comes the "digital divide" or "racial ravine" in Internet use. A Commerce Department report says the black-white gap is ominously large and "widening over time" (16.8 percentage points in 1994, 23.4 points by 1998). But there are other ways of looking at the statistics – in 1994 whites were 2.6 times as likely to have computers than blacks; by 1998 they were only 2.0 times as likely. In the four-year period, white computer ownership rose 72 percent, while black ownership increased 125 percent.

More serious and pointed allegations of bias now go directly into the news flow without checking or ordinary skeptical analysis. The classic example is "*How Schools Shortchange Girls*," the 1992 bias report by the American Association of University Women. The story was big page 1 news from coast to coast and went deep into the national consciousness. But the story wasn't true. Then, as now, girls were surging ahead of boys, getting better marks (though with lower test scores), having fewer school problems, accounting for 55 percent of all college students, and rapidly closing the age-old gender gap in advanced degrees. But no education writer or editor seems to have noticed the gap between the discouraging bias report and the reality of female success.

This year's controversy over alleged disparities in heart care followed a similar pattern of a highly publicized bias charge, slowly followed by a lightly reported correction. A February article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* seemed to show that blacks and women with chest pain were about 40 percent less likely to get a common test for heart disease than whites or men. This story of probable bias rocketed around the country all spring and summer, unbothered by media scrutiny. Then the 40 percent figure turned out to be a mistake. The raw numbers of the *NEJM* study actually showed that white men, black men, and white women are referred for the heart test at approximately the same rate, 90 percent, with black women a bit behind. The journal apologized, sort of. "We take responsibility for the media's overinterpretation of the article," the editors said. But who's taking responsibility for the media?

The long debate about racial disparities in mortgage approvals seems like an echo of the heart-care issue. Blacks are rejected about twice as often as whites, and most of us assumed bias was the explanation. But in September the federal government's Freddie Mac released a report showing blacks are almost twice as likely as whites to have bad credit histories, by 48 to 27 percent. As the *Washington Post* clearly and courageously reported on page 1, whites making \$25,000 a year or less had better credit ratings than blacks making \$65,000 to \$75,000. Very bad news, but the truth. Hugh Price, head of the Urban League, said, "If people have bad credit, they'll be denied loans, end of story."

... Part of the problem is that storytelling about bias, as columnist Michael Kelly points out, is a standard “template” in the modern newsroom culture. Journalists tend to feel that bigotry is widespread in America and they are primed to see it quickly when their counterparts in the lobbying world send in their reports. This explains why stories about alleged racial slurs among Texaco executives and the wave of church burnings in the South were still being framed as bias news long after the evidence showed that this framing was wrong. This media tilt has the effect of discounting the real gains of out-groups and depicting the country as much more prejudiced than it really is. And it has effects on news consumers in general. It’s one reason why so few people trust the press.

In U.S. News & World Report, February 2005,<sup>194</sup> M.B. Zuckerman writes: ...Too often, policy-making is held hostage to imagery. TV networks, especially cable, have neither the time nor the resources to convey memory or history, and thus they distort the meaning of events by failing to provide the context that would help us make sense of these images.

The media do not cover progress nearly as well as they cover tragedy, scandal, and decay. "If it bleeds, it leads" is a time-worn TV newsroom cliché. One car bomb wreaking destruction amid smoking Iraqi buildings is more likely to be aired than images of 100 rebuilt schools. A handful of bad guys with video cameras can prove more powerful than a platoon of engineers fixing sewers. And so, bad news drives out good. A premium is placed on finding out what's wrong as opposed to telling the full story of what's going right *and* wrong.

...TV talk shows have more and more fused with news so that assertions now regularly masquerade as fact. The same is true of blogging. Opinion congeals miraculously into conviction when audiences follow segmented media that reinforce what they already believe. Public discourse thus veers toward oversimplification and hype as network news-gathering declines and foreign bureaus close.

New York Times, June 28, 2005: "*Courts Grow Increasingly Skeptical of Any Special Protections for the Press*" by Adam Liptak: Reporters frequently maintain that they are just representatives of the public, and that any special legal protections they claim for themselves are for the good of society generally. Courts were for a time receptive to that argument. But a pileup of recent cases and judicial decisions, including the Supreme Court's refusal yesterday to hear the cases of two reporters facing jail, suggest a new hostility, one fueled by skepticism about the very value of the institutional press.

The courts' reluctance to grant reporters special rights may reflect a broader dissatisfaction by politicians and the public about the role the news media have come to play. The press has increasingly found itself a target of politically charged attacks, particularly from conservatives, who tend to view the mainstream media as liberal and out of touch with the concerns of many Americans. ...Several ... reporters have been held in contempt for refusing to identify their sources in a lawsuit brought by Wen Ho Lee. Dr. Lee, a scientist at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, was suspected of espionage in 1999 but ultimately pleaded guilty to a lesser charge.

...A television reporter in Rhode Island recently completed four months of home confinement for refusing to say who had given him a surveillance tape in a political corruption case.

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<sup>194</sup> Morimer B. Zuckerman: *Why TV holds us hostage*

Aish.com: "Dishonest Reporting Award 2001": In May 2001, BBC fabricated a film clip in an attempt to show Israeli brutality. When Israelis struck a Palestinian base in Gaza, there were no pictures of victims -- since Israel struck at empty buildings. But BBC editors inserted a film clip of Israeli victims of Palestinian terror arriving at an Israeli hospital, to suggest that these were victims of Israeli attack. The newsreader in London, a former BBC correspondent in Israel herself, ended the segment with "These are the pictures from Gaza." In July 2001, Hockstader presented a shocking 1,300-word defense of Aziz Salha, the Palestinian who proudly waved his bloody hands out of the window of a Ramallah police station after the brutal lynching of two Israelis. Hockstader provided a sympathetic psychoanalysis of the murderer: "The young man was very ill when he was a baby, he stuttered, he was shy... maybe it really wasn't him photographed in the window... people's emotions were boiling over because of Palestinians teens shot by Israeli soldiers... Israel's settlements and occupation were on Salha's mind... he was a calm, good-natured and athletic kid..." In December, Newsweek presented "A Tale of Two Enemies," a side-by-side comparison of Arafat and Sharon. Arafat is described glowingly as a "revolutionary," a "civil engineer," and a trailblazing diplomat who was the first to be accorded special status at the United Nations. Yet nowhere is Arafat described as a founder of a terrorist organization, nor is there any mention of his connection to terror acts.

Suzanne Goldenberg's coverage consistently whitewashed Palestinian terrorist activity and painted Israeli reaction as aggression. In February 2001, when a Palestinian driver plowed his bus into a bus stop, killing eight Israeli civilians, Goldenberg was quick to defend him: "Far from being... a dedicated terrorist," she wrote, he was a "man who has been taking medication for depression for two years... That Wednesday morning he added antihistamines and antibiotics to the pharmaceutical cocktail. Both can cause drowsiness, according to the pharmacist." This is even after the bus driver admitted to Israeli General Security Service investigators that the attack was intentional and premeditated. Incredibly, Goldenberg has won several journalism awards this year from British institutions. The London Press Club said her coverage was a display of "courageous and objective journalism."

In March 2001, a Palestinian sniper looked through the crosshairs of his scope and murdered Shalhevet Pass, a 10-month old Jewish baby in Hebron. AP's headline writers declared: "Jewish Toddler Dies in West Bank." AP made no mention of who perpetrated the murder, and there is no indication of the ghastly nature of the crime. According to AP, the baby just "died" -- as if from natural causes or an accident. More accurately, Shalhevet Pass was murdered, shot, gunned down, or assassinated -- by a killer, gunman, terrorist, or sniper. More AP bias appeared in June, following the heinous suicide bombing at a Tel Aviv disco. AP published the headline: "Explosion Kills Bomber in Tel Aviv." This was an early AP report, when the final death toll was not available, but at that point it was already known that there were scores of Israeli casualties. So why did AP downplay this bestial act as an "explosion," and focus on the suffering -- not of innocent teens -- but of the evil bomber? In November, when a Palestinian terrorist sprayed machine-gun fire at a bus in Jerusalem, killing two teenagers and wounding 40, AP reported: "On Sunday, a Palestinian shooting attack on a bus in a disputed section of Jerusalem killed two teen-agers, one of them a U.S.-born settler." The American citizen, 16-year-old Shoshana Ben-Yishai, is described by AP as a "settler." But she was murdered in Jerusalem. To add insult to injury, another AP report refers to the heroic Israeli civilian who killed the terrorist as, you guessed it, "a West Bank settler."

In U.S. News & World Report, February 2005,<sup>195</sup> M.B. Zuckerman writes ...Murders of innocent hostages are not "executions," with the false implication of due process. They are murderers. The terrorist is not a commando or a guerilla, and the spiritual leader who incites or condones killings is no such thing. The term is a disgraceful oxymoron...

### c- Altering video images

CBS has recently taken to the alteration of video images of New York City in several CBS news programs in which CBS logos are digitally superimposed on everything from horse-drawn carriages to billboards. The final straw came when CBS put its logo over an NBC video board during Dan Rather's New Year's Eve broadcast from Times Square. NBC is considering suing CBS for diminishing the exposure of an expensive ad. Rather says the, er, enhancement was the wrong thing to do, but the network stands behind its actions. What this amounts to is the fact that one of America's most powerful and respected news organizations essentially altered the truth in its depiction of one of the most famous events ever.

A series of high-profile cases of digital chicanery in recent years have increased skepticism of the entire news game – from Cokie Roberts claiming she was reporting from Capitol Hill when she was standing in front of a picture of the Capitol Building to the criticism *Time* took for darkening O.J. Simpson's skin on its cover. The FCC traditionally shies away from policing news content. So until the corporate powers dominating the news industry come up with some sort of code of ethics, don't believe everything you see and hear. (Modified from a report in *Time* by Michael Eskenazi, January 2000.)

*A Network Veteran Bites the Hands That Fed Him* by Janet Maslin

In 1995, the veteran CBS News correspondent Bernard Goldberg wrote an Op-Ed article for *The Wall Street Journal*, accusing his employers of slanting the news. He alleged the unfairness of a mocking report on the presidential candidate Steve Forbes and his proposal of a flat tax, citing derisive language ("scheme," "wacky" and "elixir"), the use of one-sided experts and the idea that most editors were "total dunces when it comes to the economy."

In-house reaction to this article did not augur well for Mr. Goldberg's long-term prospects at the network. He finally left in 2000. Expanding widely on the claims he made in that original article, Mr. Goldberg has written "*Bias*," a book larded with specific examples to support his point of view. He examines television's coverage of such issues as race, AIDS and homelessness showing how most of those who shape these stories tilt to the left.

"Whenever you hear an anchorman or reporter use the word 'controversial,' it is usually a signal that the idea that follows is one the media elites do not agree with," he maintains. And whenever you hear the word "conservative" on one end of the political spectrum, he adds, you won't often hear "liberal" on the other. That, he says, is because network heavyweights regard their own opinions as middle-of-the-road and simply assume that the wider world agrees with them. (He twice quotes Pauline Kael's astonished reaction to the fact that Richard Nixon had been elected president. "I don't know a single person who voted for him!" she exclaimed, despite the fact that Nixon won in 49 states. She did live in the 50th state, Massachusetts.)

Do the networks also shape a false portrait of reality? Mr. Goldberg describes, in detail, the ways in which both the AIDS epidemic and the problems of the homeless may have been distorted. He uses data from the Center for Media and Public Affairs to suggest that rumors

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<sup>195</sup> Morimer B. Zuckerman: *Why TV holds us hostage*

of a heterosexual AIDS outbreak were greatly exaggerated and that many of those afflicted caught the virus via drug use or sex with those already affected. He singles out “*The Killer Next Door*,” a report on CBS’s “*48 Hours*” that featured a middle-class, married, white woman as a representative AIDS patient.

He claims that a CBS producer was chided (“We have to be more careful next time”) for filming too many black prisoners on an Alabama chain gang, even though only one prisoner happened to be white. If the program was truly sensitive to race, he asks, why not investigate whether the black convicts had been unfairly arrested, instead of worrying about putting them on the air? And why, he wonders, are there demonstrably fewer black interviewees on news magazine shows during the all-important periods that determine advertising rates? “South Africa in the bad old days was more integrated than ‘Dateline’ during sweeps!” he says.

Mr. Goldberg’s hits keep on coming as he reels off obvious absurdities. He mentions a rule for the Gannett newspaper chain insisting upon minority sources for all stories, so that a Greenville, S.C., story about Hanukkah required someone who was both Jewish and from a racial minority group. (“Too bad Sammy Davis Jr. is dead,” he says.) Then there is the insistence upon calling the black victim of a hate crime “African-American” on the “*CBS Evening News*,” even though the man was actually Jamaican.

In the end, the observations in “*Bias*” about the economics of television are as disturbing as what he has to say about the homeless (they were more apt to be deranged and dangerous than television indicated) or religion (someone in television once thoughtlessly referred to Gary Bauer as “the little nut from the Christian group” at a meeting). The most important bias to contemplate here is the one against serious, unglamorous news. “Edward R. Murrow’s ‘*Harvest of Shame*,’ the great *CBS News* documentary about poor migrant families traveling America trying to survive by picking fruits and vegetables, would never be done today,” he says. “Too many poor people. Not our audience. We want the people who buy cars and computers.”

#### **d- News blackouts**

David Bar Ilan, *Jerusalem Post*, December 24, 1999

For more than three years, the PA has been sheltering terrorists responsible for killing American citizens. American law authorizes the administration to do everything in its power to bring such killers to trial.

If the government in whose jurisdiction terrorists find shelter refuses to cooperate, American agents ignore local law, apprehend the terrorists and bring them to justice in the U.S. Ramzy Yousef, one of the two most wanted terrorists in the world (the other is Osama Bin Laden) was hiding in Pakistan when American agents caught him and brought him to New York for trial.

Yet the administration, eager not to embarrass Arafat, has avoided asking for the extradition of these terrorists, some of whom are serving in the Palestinian Police. Nor has it acted to apprehend them. This in itself is a news story by any criteria. But the two leading American newspapers, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, have totally ignored the issue. Even more astonishing, these papers have consistently ignored a three-year struggle by the American Jewish community, spearheaded by the Zionist Organization of America, to force the administration’s hand.

Last month, for the first time ever, Congress enacted legislation that addressed the issue of American victims of Palestinian terrorism. This, too, was blacked out by these newspapers.

True, the legislation is practically toothless. It does not impose penalties on the PA if it refuses to cooperate. But it does put the State Department on notice. The administration is required to report twice a year on the status and whereabouts of Palestinian terrorists involved in killing Americans.

Since some of these terrorists serve in the Palestinian Police and in other official positions, the publication of such reports may have some impact on American voters interested in the Middle East.

Yet there was not a word in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* about the Senate hearings to which Israeli Justice Ministry experts were invited, the petitions jointly signed by such political adversaries as Americans for Peace Now founder Leonard Fein and ZOA president Morton Klein, or the public statements made jointly by Orthodox, Conservative and Reform rabbis.

The papers found no interest in the outrageous evasions by administration officials (Secretary of State Madeleine Albright claimed she was “not familiar with the issue,” Undersecretary Thomas Pickering was “unaware” of it). Nor did they consider it newsworthy that the U.S. posted rewards for all terrorists wanted for killing Americans, except Palestinians.

Even more newsworthy was that some of the administration’s most ardent supporters in Congress joined the attack on its appeasement policy. Congress’s attitude could not have been made clearer than when it voted 406-0 for a resolution urging Clinton to press Arafat to hand over killers of Americans.

Yet the two major American newspapers considered none of this newsworthy. It is as if there is an unspoken gentlemen’s agreement not to rock the boat of the Oslo process. That their silence may cost more American lives does not seem worthy of consideration.

An even more sensational story is being ignored almost as assiduously. It has nothing to do with Israel, but its virtual banishment from the media reflects the same kind of political correctness.

In its magazine section last Friday, *Yediot Aharonot* published a scathing report by Shaul Tzadka about the deterioration of South Africa since the anti-apartheid revolution. Most of the world media, to their credit, enthusiastically and consistently supported this revolution. But now they seem deliberately blind to some of its uglier consequences.

These may be embarrassing and sickening, but above all they are a tragedy which must be told.

According to Tzadka, today’s South Africa leads the world in murders, armed robberies and drug dealing. Sixty-five people are murdered every day. (That’s almost 25,000 a year, 10 times higher per capita than in the U.S.) Six women are raped every hour. Downtown areas are no-man’s lands, where whites neither tread nor drive, and where taking a taxi is a dangerous adventure.

Gangs of vigilantes take the law into their own hands. They murder crime suspects after bailing them out of jail. Syndicates openly run drug, prostitution, money laundering, protection, diamond smuggling, vehicle hijacking and other rackets. The economy is in a shambles. Foreign investments have stopped. Sixty per cent of the work force is jobless. Corruption is rampant, particularly in law-enforcement agencies. The courts are impotent.

In the days of the Soviet empire there were sympathizers of the Communist revolution in the Western media who either kept silent about what they knew of the unspeakable Soviet regime, or wrote party-line fiction glorifying it. (Among the latter was the *New York Times*’

first Pulitzer Prize winner, Walter Duranty.) They seemed to believe that the revolution was not only right, but a historic imperative whose injustices would be corrected in time. What they achieved was precisely the opposite. Stalinism triumphed because it felt it could commit its crimes with impunity.

It is entirely possible that the world press is again unable to face the side effects of a revolution it supported. But somehow it is difficult to shake off the nagging suspicion that there is also a racist element at play; that had it been a white regime, such tolerance would not have been forthcoming.

## *xii- TV and Hollywood*

### **a- TV**

TV is a media which, even when we are only viewing the news, distorts our perspective of things.<sup>196</sup>

Two-thirds of 8-to-18-year-olds and one-third of 2-to-7-year-olds already have TVs in their bedrooms.<sup>197</sup>

Only 58% of parents have rules about TV viewing, while 81% are concerned about the amount of violence their children see in movies and on TV.<sup>198</sup>

Most nights ours are the last voices our children hear before they sleep. An acquaintance once boasted that her three kids, including a toddler, put themselves to bed. All she had to do was turn out the lights and lower the volume on each child's TV.<sup>199</sup>

Philo Farnsworth was the inventor of the television set. His son Kent was once asked what his attitude to television was. He said, "I suppose you could say that he felt he had created kind of a monster, a way for people to waste a lot of their lives." He added, "Throughout my childhood his reaction to television was 'There's nothing on it worthwhile, and we're not going to watch it in this household, and I don't want it in your intellectual diet.'" (*Time Magazine – Men of the Century*, December 1999)

And things have only gotten worse since Farnsworth's time.

*Time* (April, 2000) reported that according to a new report from the Parents Television Council, we were bombarded in 1999 with more than three times the onscreen sexual

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<sup>196</sup> Dennis Prager wrote an article (Ultimate Issues, Winter 1986-87) called, The false world of television news, in which he described how television, even when it is just the news, distorts our perspectives of things because it makes us relate only to what we see on the screen, and to ignore that which we are not shown as non-existent: Most people do not empathize with others' suffering unless they see that suffering.

This rule manifests itself in virtually every are of life.

Between visible and invisible anguish, the visible nearly always wins – even when the anguish of the invisible is far greater. A dramatic example is the compassion for criminals exhibited by many of those who display considerably less compassion for, or simply ignore, the suffering of the criminals' victims. A primary factor here is that the criminal is visible, while the victim, especially if murdered, is quite invisible.

Whenever I see the crowd of candleholders standing vigil outside a prison where a murderer is about to be executed, I wonder why these people never stand vigil at the home of the murdered person's family.

The issue of abortion provides another example. While I believe in a woman's right to choose abortion at least during the first trimester of pregnancy, I am convinced that a major reason for the seeming lack of moral ambivalence among the "pro-choice" advocates is that the pregnant woman is visible while the fetus is invisible. This is why the anti-abortion film *The Silent Scream*, which shows a fetus being aborted so annoyed the pro-choice advocates. For the first time, the fetus, too, was rendered visible.

In international affairs and history, the same rule holds. Take, for example, the utterly differing responses to the Nazi Holocaust and to the Soviets' genocidal policies in the Stalin era. As a Jew I am quite pleased that the Western world, at least, has not forgotten the Holocaust. But why has there been a total lack of sympathy or even interest in the 30-plus million Ukrainians and others murdered by the Soviet Communists.

Americans have also repeatedly seen the maltreatment of South African blacks on their television sets. Yet, the Afghan people, for example, who have been suffering a fate worse than that of apartheid – namely, the death or exile of half of all the Afghan people – have not been in the American national consciousness. The Afghans have not been on television. Out of sight, out of mind. It is as simple as that, and the Soviets know it. That is why they announced that they would kill any unauthorized Western journalist found in Afghanistan.

<sup>197</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation report in 1999

<sup>198</sup> 1999 study by the National Institute on Media and the Family

<sup>199</sup> From Eugenie Allen in *Time Magazine*, December 25, 2000, *TV Under the Tree?*

situations that we saw 10 years ago.<sup>200</sup> The use of “foul language” which, in council terms, includes references to being gay or to having any kind of sex life, has also increased sharply. Depictions of violence have remained roughly static. Networks struggling to compete with “edgy” cable shows come out with their own “edgy” shows – and that generally means pushing the envelope in terms of language and sexual situations.<sup>201</sup>

<sup>200</sup> The following chart appeared in the U.S. News & World Report, February 19, 2001:

**Percentage of programs with sexual content:**

Genre	1998	2000
Sitcom	56%	84%
Drama show	58	69
Movies	83	89
News mag.	58	74
Reality	23	27
Soap	85	80
Talk show	78	67
<b>Average</b>	56	68

NYTimes, August 2003: Formal complaints on indecency to the F.C.C.... have not flown off the charts, according to David Solomon, chief of the agency's enforcement bureau. The number of complaints hovers around 400 a year, he said, with only a fraction receiving enforcement action. "There was a sense in the early days of television that you were going into people's homes, so you had to be on your best behavior," said Louis Chunovic, the author of "One Foot on the Floor: The Curious Evolution of Sex on Television from 'I Love Lucy' to 'South Park' " (TV Books, 2000).

For better or worse, that sense of decorum is long gone. The F.C.C. is responsible only for radio and broadcast television, where to be labeled indecent, material must "describe or depict sexual or excretory organs or activities" and be patently offensive to contemporary "community standards" — a guideline with debate built in.

U.S. News & World Report, February 16, 2004: A 2003 study by the Kaiser Family foundation found that 64 percent of all shows and 71 percent of all prime-time broadcast shows have at least some sexual content. Only 15 percent of all sexual references or actions were considered to be "responsible," in that they suggested either responsibility or consequences. And while sexual reference hasn't been increasing, Kaiser found the content has gotten more explicit.

<sup>201</sup> Jim Rutenberg reported in the New York Times on Sep. 2, 2001 that Aaron Sorkin, the executive producer of "The West Wing" on NBC, says he hopes to break a longstanding network taboo this coming television season: he wants a character to use the Lord's name in vain. Steven Bochco, the executive producer of "Philly," a new legal drama on ABC, has proposed having a character use a scatological reference that has never before been uttered on an ABC series – one considered tougher than the profanities already in use on his police drama, "NYPD Blue." CBS executives say that writers are submitting scripts for programs that include every curse word imaginable.

None of these ideas has yet been cleared by a network censor. If the experience of the last year or two is any indication, there will be many heated discussions about them and, probably, some new leeway granted. But the standards are being forever eased.

Broadcast television is under siege by smaller cable competitors that are winning audiences while pushing adult content. In that climate, broadcast is fighting the perception that its tastes are lagging behind those of a media-saturated culture whose mores have grown more permissive.

The networks are, meanwhile, trying to satisfy advertisers who are tight with their money in difficult economic times and are grasping for a younger audience that has been nurtured on potty-mouthed realism.

So censors are becoming more lenient. Last television season, CBS allowed the use of the commonly used word for dung in a live production of "On Golden Pond" and it received no major protest. An entire episode of "The Job," on ABC, revolved around the joyous visits by the main characters, police officers, to a massage parlor that offered a particular sort of sexual favor.

Even early-evening programs like "Friends," on NBC, make regular references to masturbation and bodily functions, areas that broadcasters previously ignored. In an episode of "Boston Public," shown at 8 p.m. on Fox, a female student performs oral sex on a male student in return for his agreement not to run against her for the student council presidency.

"What's really happening now is a transformation to the daily normalization of this," said Robert Thompson, professor of media and pop culture at Syracuse University. "It's commonplace to hear [dirty] jokes on 'Friends' at 8 o'clock; even gentle little programs like 'Everybody Loves Raymond' have the kind of stuff that, when it played on 'Three's Company' 20 years ago, made the PTA go completely ballistic."

Of course, broadcast television, which is available to every home with a television set, can only go so far. It still has to appeal to the largest audiences possible and operate under the decency standards enforced by the Federal Communications Commission. The networks are flanked in most homes by cable channels that do not face similar restriction. In recent months, increasingly large audiences have been lured to anything-goes cable

As for the reduction in non-wrestling violence, credit that to the expense of making of shoot-'em-up, cops-and-robbers-type shows, a genre that has been in decline anyway in recent years.

By age 20 an American child will have watched 700,000 TV commercials. According to New York University professor and media critic Neil Postman, "There are several messages in these ads: that all problems are solvable, that all solutions are quickly available through the use of some chemical, food, drug or machine."<sup>202</sup>

When we talk about people being addicted to TV, we are not only talking metaphorically. TV addiction is a real thing.<sup>203</sup>

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programs like "The Sopranos" and "Sex and the City" on HBO – posing a greater threat to the networks' market share. This season, "South Park," an animated show on Comedy Central, used the four-letter word for dung 162 times in a single episode. ...

The question now is ... how far the public will allow them to go. So far, there has been little outcry. And officials at the Federal Communications Commission said the number of indecency complaints involving television remained negligible and no actions had been taken against stations for network programs this year. Federal decency standards cover broadcast television and radio, from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. ...

"Broadcast television can grow up as the rest of the country does," Mr. Sorkin, the producer of "The West Wing," said. "And there's absolutely no reason why we can't use the language of adulthood in programs that are about adults."

In "The Year of Living Indecently" (Feb. 2005), Frank Rich writes: At the 2004 Super Bowl, Janet Jackson bared one of her breasts in full view of the TV cameras. During NBC's presentation of the Olympics last summer, actors donned body suits to simulate "nude" ancient Greek statues. A children's show "Postcards From Buster" used to portray lesbians until public outcry stopped it. PBS was forced to edit its 2005 broadcast of "Dirty War," the HBO-BBC film about a terrorist attack, to remove a glimpse of female nudity in a scene depicting nuclear detoxification. Airborne, a cold remedy, attempted to show the backside of the 84-year-old Mickey Rooney as he leaves a sauna. The number of annual indecency complaints increased from 111 in 2000 to a million-plus in 2005.

<sup>202</sup> Lance Morrow in *Time* (June 1, 1992): *But Seriously Folks* ...

<sup>203</sup> In the Jan. '02 edition of *Scientific American*, researchers Robert Kubey and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi reported that "TV addiction" is a real thing: Psychologists and psychiatrists formally define substance dependence as a disorder characterized by criteria that include spending a great deal of time using the substance; using it more often than one intends; thinking about reducing use or making repeated unsuccessful efforts to reduce use; giving up important social, family or occupational activities to use it; and reporting withdrawal symptoms when one stops using it.

All these criteria can apply to people who watch a lot of television. That does not mean that watching television, per se, is problematic. Television can teach and amuse; it can reach aesthetic heights; it can provide much needed distraction and escape. The difficulty arises when people strongly sense that they ought not to watch as much as they do and yet find themselves strangely unable to reduce their viewing.

The amount of time people spend watching television is astonishing. On average, individuals in the industrialized world devote three hours a day to the pursuit – fully half of their leisure time, and more than one any single activity save work and sleep. At this rate, someone who lives to 75 would spend nine years in front of the tube ... In Gallup polls in 1992 and 1999, two out of five adult respondents and seven out of 10 teenagers said they spent too much time watching TV. Other surveys have consistently shown that roughly 10 percent of adults call themselves TV addicts. ...

People who were watching TV reported feeling relaxed and passive. The EEG studies similarly show less mental stimulation, as measured by alpha brain-wave production, during viewing than during reading.

What is more surprising is that the sense of relaxation ends when the set is turned off, but the feelings of passivity and lowered alertness continue. Survey participants commonly reflect that television has somehow absorbed or sucked out their energy, leaving them depleted. They say they have more difficulty concentrating after viewing than before. In contrast, they rarely indicate such difficulty after reading. After playing sports or engaging in hobbies, people report improvements in mood. After watching TV, people's moods are about the same or worse than before.

Within moments of sitting or lying down and pushing the "power" button, viewers report feeling more relaxed. Because the relaxation occurs quickly, people are conditioned to associate viewing with rest and lack of tension. The association is positively reinforced because viewers remain relaxed throughout viewing, and it is negatively reinforced via the stress and dysphoric rumination that occurs once the screen goes blank again.

Habit-forming drugs work in similar ways. A tranquilizer that leaves the body rapidly is much more likely to cause dependence than one that leaves the body slowly, precisely because the user is more aware that the drug's

*New York Times* Poll, April 2000:

Do you think what is shown on television today is less moral than American society, more moral than American society, or accurately reflects morality in American society?

1. Less	46%
2. More	9%
3. Accurate	37%
9. NS/Ref	8%

*NY Times*, 25 September, 2000

As more of the machines find their way into children's rooms, "the whole pattern of use of mass media works to isolate children from adults," said William Damon, director of the Stanford University Center on Adolescence.

Even where the programming is benign, the array of video games, televisions, computers, DVDs and music systems creates a virtual world where adults often fear to tread. "Parents don't feel they have access to their children's electronic worlds," Dr. Damon said. "In lots and lots of ways, parents have stepped back from believing kids need their guidance, including a 'no.'"

As recently as a few decades ago, most children did not have their own bedrooms, let alone the electronic isolation available to today's teenagers. Among children aged 8 to 18, according to "*Kids and Media at the New Millennium*," a 1999 survey by the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation, 65 percent have TVs in their bedrooms, 45 percent have video game players, and 21 percent have computers there. Though televisions in children's rooms may seem commonplace, their takeover has been sweeping. In 1970, only 6 percent of sixth graders had sets in their rooms; by last year, the figure had risen to 77 percent.

In a family room in Jersey City last weekend, Jamie Niskanen-Singer, 12, loaded a Nintendo 64 game called *Turok 2: Seeds of Evil*, which is rated "Mature 17+. Animated Blood and Gore. Animated Violence." His father, Howard Singer, watched as Jamie used the "cerebral bore" gun to rip a character's head open. Jamie said the action helped him relax, "because I have control of what's going on," unlike with television. His father, apparently getting his first taste of *Turok*, conceded, "It is a little violent, but we think he can differentiate between a game and real life."

### **Advertisements**

*Kid Power*, Kate Kelly and Linda Kulman: U.S. News and World Report, September 13, 2004: Some parents report that baby's first word was not "mama" or "dad" but "Coke" - which makes sense considering that 26 percent of kids 2 and under have a TV in their room and the average American child sees some 40,000 commercials a year. That in turn helps explain why the United States, with 4.5 percent of the world's population, buys 45 percent of the global toy production. American kids get an average of 70 new toys a year, calculates Schor, who surveyed 300 children for her new book, *Born to Buy*.

... In 1984, children ages 4 to 12 spent \$4.2 billion – that's their own pocket money. This year, they'll lay out \$35 billion, often at stores built just for them.... They will influence

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effects are wearing off. Similarly, viewers' vague learned sense that they will feel less relaxed if they stop viewing may be a significant factor in not turning the set off. Viewing begets more viewing. Thus, the irony of TV: people watch a great deal longer than they plan to, even though prolonged viewing is less rewarding. In our ESM studies the longer people sat in front of the set, the less satisfaction they said they derived from it. When signaled, heavy viewers (those who consistently watch more than four hours a day) tended to report on their ESM sheets that they enjoy TV less than light viewers did (less than two hours a day).

\$670 billion worth of parental purchases, both small (which snacks to buy) and large (which SUV) this year. By comparison, the 2005 U.S. military budget is \$417.5 billion.... Cheaper technology and more money have also made it easier to give- and give in. And kids know what they want: Advertisers spend some \$15 billion a year telling them what's hot...

Advertising even goes to school. "It started in the '90s with soda-pouring contracts, fast-food deals, and the spread of Channel One," says Eric Schlosser, author of Fast Food Nation. The daily broadcast, which mixes 10 minutes of news with two minutes of ads, airs in 40 percent of the nation's middle and high schools. These days, companies even pay for their brands to appear in textbooks.

And while Madison Avenue once tried to impress parents ("Choosy moms choose Jif"), a former Saatchi & Saatchi employee told Schor, advertisers are now moving "toward direct kid marketing and not even worrying about Mom. Just take her out of the equation because the nag factor is so strong." A 2002 survey found that on average kids ages 12 to 17 ask nine times before parents give in, and more than 10 percent of 12- and 13-year-olds reported nagging parents more than 50 times for an item. "You say no to 99 percent of what your kids ask for, but you can't say no to everything," says Diane Levin ...

*Our Ratings, Ourselves*, Jon Gertner: published April 10, 2005: For the past decade or so, watching television in America has been defined by the families recruited by Nielsen Media Research who have agreed to have an electronic meter attached to their televisions or to record in a diary what shows they watch. This setup may not last much longer. [Now] Arbitron Company... a couple of thousand volunteers in Houston ... randomly chose... men, women and children to wear a black plastic box that looks like a pager, ... the P.P.M. will tell Arbitron exactly what kind -- and exactly how much -- television and radio programming a person was exposed to during the day. Change the way you count, for instance, and you can change where the advertising dollars go, which in turn determines what shows are made and what shows then are renewed....

In all likelihood, the Houston trial will show that people are exposed to far more media and advertising than they think, or remember. Some P.P.M. tests in Philadelphia have already indicated that wearers tune into twice as many radio stations on a typical day as they ever note in their diaries. More significant, the P.P.M. expands the boundaries of media consumption. That's because it passively registers media both inside and outside of the home -- what P.P.M. volunteers are exposed to in bars, airports, health clubs and hotel rooms. ... The next step, and the more lofty ambition, is to measure advertising's impact.

To this end, Apollo will track 70,000 people across the country who wear the P.P.M. all day. But not for the sake of ratings. The advertisements and messages these 70,000 people see, hear, read, encounter will be matched to the purchases they make. You could say it's a massive scientific trial of cause (marketing) and effect (buying). Or you could say with some trepidation that it's about creating a more perfect, more efficient consumer society. Moreover, Apollo could give advertisers a clearer understanding of whether radio, TV or even the Web (the Internet usage of those 70,000 people will be monitored) gives them the best rate of return on their ad dollars. For instance, if Apollo demonstrates that advertisements for lemonade have a higher success rate on radio than television -- that is, the radio advertisements seem more successful at getting Apollo volunteers to buy the lemonade -- it would help companies figure out how to reallocate their marketing dollars.

## TV voyeurism

The following is based on an article by James Poniewozik in *Time*, June 26, 2000.

Led by the hit *Survivor*, voyeurism has become TV's hottest genre. Why the passion for peeping?<sup>204</sup>

*Survivor*, which has a larvae-eating contest, strands 16 people on a tropical island to scabble for food and shelter, all for the pleasure of viewers watching it on TV. The contestants vote one another off the island until there is a single million-dollar winner and 15 rejects. It's the suffering, the mean-spiritedness, the humiliation.

And that's why more than 23 million people are watching *Survivor*. Welcome to the rise of VTV, voyeur television where ordinary people are becoming our new celebrities. The price: living in front of cameras that catch their every tantrum, embarrassment and moral lapse. Why on earth are so many people willing to let us look?

Our culture is deep into a populist period of personal confession, the First-Person Era. There's the unflagging craze for memoirs – especially ordinary people's tales of woe and there's the World Wide Web, the invention that puts the "me" in "medium." No sooner was the Internet opened to home users than its essential text became the personal home page, a document dedicated to the fact that its author exists: here I am, here is my dog, here is my story. And that was before 24-hour webcams enabled their users to broadcast live feeds from their offices and boudoirs, even from inside their refrigerators. With so many willing, casual exhibitionists among us, it's less surprising that VTV happened than that it didn't happen sooner.

And the potential money and fame generally don't hurt. That was the explicit draw of *Making the Band*, the ABC reality show that chronicles the auditioning and training of aspiring boy band O-Town. "It was the sweetest," says Trevor Penick, 20, of getting picked for the show. "Just like *The Real World*, you know?" Indeed. Some seasons, *The Real World* has seemed like a postgraduate program for aspiring actors, models and singers, with more than 35,000 applicants a year. "The ideal candidate [for a VTV show] would be a strong narcissist," says Atlanta psychologist Robert Simmermon.

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The following are some of the TV shows that are called euphemistically 'reality based TV':

SURVIVOR

NUMBER WHO APPLIED 6,100+

Sixteen castaways compete to be the last one standing after 39 days on a desert island

THE REAL WORLD

NUMBER WHO APPLIED 35,000+

Seven drama-prone young people experience romance and culture conflict in New Orleans

THE 1900 HOUSE

NUMBER WHO APPLIED 400+

An English family spends three months living like a middle-class household circa 1900

MAKING THE BAND

NUMBER WHO APPLIED 1,800

Twenty-five aspiring singers are whittled down to five, to form an N Sync-like pop group

BIG BROTHER

NUMBER WHO APPLIED 1,000+

Ten inmates are stuck in a house and isolated from the outside world

Time/CNN Poll

Would you be willing to allow a reality-based TV show to film you:

In your pajamas – 31%

Kissing – 29%

Crying – 26%

Having an argument – 25%

Drunk – 16%

Eating a rat or an insect – 10%

Naked – 8%

In *Life the Movie: How Entertainment Conquered Reality*, Neal Gabler argued that celebrity culture had created a universal lust for the camera, and he sees these series as a case in point. “Reality has become the greatest entertainment of all,” he says. “It’s symptomatic of a larger phenomenon that all of life is entertainment.”

In *Survivor*, we can map its petty squabbles and triumphs on our own lives. Those mismatched 16, working together, then looking out for No. 1, could be your co-workers, your family.

VTV stars offer a feeling of accessibility that traditional TV’s Flockharts and Schwimmers, with their phalanxes of publicists and flunkies, don’t. You feel you’re seeing, if not the true person, at least a less mediated version. This puts these fame-game amateurs in the awkward position of having their very souls judged in public. “People stop me in the street and say, ‘I really related to your character,’” says *Real World* vet Kevin Powell, 33. “I wasn’t a character. That was me.” And these noncelebrity celebrities tend to be bite-size stars, celebrity snacks whom the public down in one gulp. *Survivor* spins off a new star every week as the contestants are voted off; each makes a weeklong round of the press – all to stoke the ratings of the bastards who eighty-sixed them! – and then flames out. “I’m so tired,” Stillman said the day after her expulsion aired. “I’ve done about 40 interviews so far.”

And unlike TV actors, VTV stars don’t know what their “characters” will be like until the show airs. In 1973 the Loud family of California became the test rabbits for the genre when PBS filmed their lives – including the coming out of son Lance and the breakup of the parents’ marriage – in the seminal cinema-verite documentary *An American Family*. The Louds were utterly unprepared to become national symbols of suburban angst. “My mom was very proud of the family she had raised,” says Lance, now 49. “It ultimately crushed her how much of the show’s emphasis was on the divorce.” Sister Michele, now 42, remembers the first screening. “The opening title card read *An American Family*, and then the words cracked and fell to the bottom of the screen,” she says. “We all just looked at each other and said, ‘Uh-oh.’”

Ironically, the mainstream embrace of voyeurism comes precisely as many Americans feel their own privacy is in danger, be it from surveillance on the job, marketers on the Net or database-wielding bureaucrats in their HMOs. “The notion that people should be able to go home and close their front door and shut out the outside world seems to be breaking down, especially in light of the new technologies,” says Reg Whitaker, political science professor at York University in Canada and author of *The End of Privacy* (New Press; \$25). “These shows are a kind of acting out of the mingled fascination and fear that surrounds this, a way of playing it out in a kind of harmless way.”

Thus far TV’s voyeurism has not met the organized moral outcry that European groups – religious, political, psychological – have directed toward the continent’s reality freak shows. But Americans have not yet met *Big Brother*.

Walk through the nearly completed seven-room house in Studio City, California, where 10 contestants will spend 89 days being filmed for edited, same-day broadcasts five nights a week (starting July 5), and you get an idea of what so unsettled some continentals. A 24-hour website will stream video from selected cameras in the house. “When you walk through a city, you look through windows and wonder who is living there,” says Romer. “That curiosity is completely satisfied by these shows.” The residents will, barring emergencies, have no outside contact, except with the producers. They will harvest eggs from chickens, grow their own veggies and wash their clothes on washboards. And unlike on *Survivor*, they will be voted off by viewers (the last standing wins \$500,000). They will be rejected by America.

The rules, the surroundings, even the name – everything about *Big Brother* seems calculated to provoke publicity-generating criticism, viewer guilt and inmate discomfort and rebellion. From the ads (we get a glimpse of a shadowy form behind a shower curtain) to the totalitarian overtones (the producers address houseguests through a p.a. system), it pushes every button about VTV's potential for corruption and abuse.

Worrisome is the overall message the shows send: that life is an elimination contest, that difference means discord.<sup>205</sup> *The Real World* is a sort of teen-friendly Adam-and-Eve story – seven young people, set up in a coolly furnished paradise, are bound to screw it up. *Survivor* and *Big Brother* change the reference from *Genesis* to *Lord of the Flies* and *No Exit*. But if what they show can be ugly, it's insulting to the audience to assume viewers must take this as a model for life – that's like saying *Chinatown* is an immoral movie because the bad guy gets away.

Viewers may reject VTV altogether before long. In Holland, *Big Brother's* follow-up, *De Bus*, drew just 5.7% of viewers, compared with 53% for its predecessor, even though its pretty young contestants all shared the same 5-m-wide bed on their communal-living bus.

Yet, as Art Buchwald wrote in 2001, television is getting meaner and meaner. The “survival” shows depend on meanness to hold the audience's interest. And now there is “*The Weakest Link*,” featuring Anne Robinson, and English scold. She created a hit in Britain by telling her contestants to take a walk because they are in the weakest link in the chain.

Whereas in the past you were rooting for you man or woman contestant, now your enjoyment comes from seeing either one fall flat on their face.

“We only want young people from 13 to 39 watching. These are the people who buy our products ...”

“... Young people seem to like mean ...”

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<sup>205</sup> After *Survivor* was over, Lance Morow contributed this web-only essay to *Time Magazine*, (Aug. 2000 – edited):

The whole thing left you – didn't it? – with a slightly stupid, unclean feeling. The real winners were the people who thought the thing up in the first place and collected billions from advertisers. Otherwise, it seems to me, there clung to this 15-minute summer phenomenon an obscure sense of shame.

They knew what the game was about; they knew they were being used and corrupted. Everyone on the island knew that. The contestants, all but naked, were diving for pennies thrown from a cruise ship by laughing idiots in plaid trousers.

The point of “*Survivor*” had nothing to do with anything as urgent or interesting as survival; the point of “*Survivor*” was a million bucks. ... I hope the audience also had the grace to feel guilty about watching what was essentially a display of humiliating avarice. ...

In the famous Milgrim experiments some years ago at Yale, subjects were directed to administer what they were told were painful jolts of electricity to other subjects arrayed behind a one-way mirror. No real electricity was used, of course; but the subjects of the study, holding the “power controls” in their hands, did not know that. The point of the experiment was to show how casually and amorally cruel ordinary people could be to others, for no more reason than the supposed instructions of test psychologists. Well, the people on the island had a better reason to behave badly. If they were cunning enough about screwing the others, they'd get the money.

Was this supposed to be a lesson in human behavior? “*Survivor*” was like another short-lived craze, “*The Blair Witch Project*,” about several very stupid young people lost in the woods without a compass. No merit badges awarded in that troop. No merit badges, and no moral compass, on the island either.

In Vermont towns of two hundred years ago, the residents would sometimes issue what they called a “warning out.” This was a formal notice that a person, or a family, was not wanted in the town and would have to leave, for whatever reason. Ostracism is an old, sometimes brutal instrument of tribal discipline. But I doubt the Vermonters were ever goaded into such cruelty by television producers dangling a million dollars. ...

Americans watched the show like they watched the Super Bowl, 16 million and up every single week, and more than that talked about it the morning after. ... “*Survivor*” will be back for prime-time reruns on Sept. 14, complete with interviews and never-before-seen footage. That should almost last us to halftime of the Super Bowl in January, when “*Survivor II*” kicks off.

**b- Hollywood values and actors**

Hollywood stars are judged by one thing only, how much money they bring in. Studios need stars. The star's main responsibility is to ensure that first weekend. A star must open a picture.

Will Smith for example, averaged a box office gross over 200 million dollars per picture, for his last four movies. Jim Carrey, Mel Gibson, Tom Hanks and Tom Cruise are all in the same league. Cruise at 37 has starred in five consecutive films each grossing more than one hundred million dollars. But Adam Sandler is considered by many in the business as being the star. The reason: His movies cost next to zero and bring in huge profits.

Brad Pitt, the fifth star to explode on the scene in 1994, had a double-hitter, *Interview with the Vampire* and *Legends of the Fall*. But his last three films cost a quarter of a billion dollars in net loss. Still, he is as in demand as ever and his price has not gone down. Why you may ask?

For that answer, we have to enter the world of sex. Sometimes beautiful young men are ordained stars by the studios. Whether their record deserves it or not. Guys who look like stars.

Example, Richard Gere: made a tremendous impression in 1977. *Looking For Mr. Goodbar*. Gere was anointed. New star. Four straight flops. (Remember please, this is not about the quality of the films or his skill as a performer. This is about opening flicks.) Finally, *Officer and a Gentleman*. See, the execs said? We told you so. Do we know magic or do we know magic? After *Officer and a Gentleman*, Gere went into a truly phenomenal decline. Most people have never even heard of his next seven movies over the next six years, 1983-1988. But he was given star role after star role. (Then, in 1990, *Internal Affairs* did some business and *Pretty Woman* made the executives breathe easy again.)

Another example is Mel Gibson. In the mid 80's Gibson had four flops. But he was a star, the studios knew it, they kept giving him lead parts in expensive pictures which failed. Then the first *Lethal Weapon* saved his career.

Brad Pitt's summer picture of this year, *The Fight Club*, was yanked from the schedule. Doesn't matter to Pitt's career. He is a star. He looks like one. He will go on getting leads – as long as he stays beautiful. Of course, if he gains thirty pounds, over and out. (Culled from *The Big Picture* by William Goldman winner of two Oscars for Hollywood screen-writing.)

Most people know that the personal lives of many Hollywood actors are a mess if not a wreck. They also know that the values which Hollywood movies project are not ones that the society ought to be aspiring to. Yet amazingly, Hollywood stars remain heroes. People search out their autographs, look for their pictures and often drool when they see them. Here follow some scattered examples of what Hollywood, and its actors are all about:

Kirk Douglas, *Climbing the Mountain – My Search for Meaning* (Simon & Schuster 1997):

In this hectic world I didn't take the time to get in touch with myself. ... It wasn't until I hit my sixties that I began consciously thinking about Issur (Douglas's original name whom he refers to when he wants to talk about the real him). (pg. 45)

All my life I sought a pat on the back, the approval of applause. That's probably one of the reasons why I became an actor. And I never got enough. It took me a long time to learn that my desire for approval was insatiable, that it could never be fulfilled. (pg. 46)

John Leo, *The Recycling of Reputations*: U.S. News & World Report: Though still in prison, Joel Steinberg has a job lined up with a cable TV show in New York City. He qualifies for

this position – as field producer and perhaps as an on-camera interviewer, by committing a ghastly killing. He beat to death his illegally adopted 6 year old daughter in 1987. The story hit the city hard. For almost a year, people placed flowers outside the brownstone where Lisa was killed. Soon they will be able to watch the killer try to parlay her death into a TV career. The recycling of perpetrators is simply part of the media game now. New York Times reporter Jayson Blair got a six figure advance for a book on his short, disastrous career. Blair plagiarized some stories and fabricated others, but his publisher, oddly, describes him as "very honest." Stephen Glass, who wrote many attention-getting false stories for the New Republic and other magazines, got a movie sale and a big book deal for a novelized version of his hoaxes. Rolling Stone, one of the journals he defrauded, has hired him again to write. This is like a bank rehiring an embezzler. Hollywood does it too. Roman Polanski drugged and raped a 13 year old girl, then fled the country before sentencing. This year Academy Award voters had no compunctions about giving him the Oscar for best director. R. Kelly, the popular singer, is out on bail for 21 counts of possessing child pornography. The charges stem from a video police say shows Kelly having sex with an underage girl. It hasn't hurt his popularity. Sports announcer Marv Albert appeared to have thrown away his career in a messy sex scandal in 1997. He plea-bargained to avoid prison, was fired by NBC, and resigned as MSG announcer for New York Knicks game. His ostracism was brief. In 1998, he was named host of "MSG Sports Desk" and signed with Turner Sports Desk" and signed with Turner Sports in 1999. He was black with NBC just 21 months after his guilty plea. In politics, Dick Morris was briefly disgraced in 1996 by a prostitute's claim let her eavesdrop on his phone conversations with President Clinton. He is now back as a respected political commentator. President George W. Bush recycled and honored Adm. John Poindexter and others involved in the Iran-contra scandal, as if their criminal acts were of no consequence. Poindexter's convictions, overturned on a technicality (that Congress had granted immunity for testimony), included conspiracy, lying to Congress, and destroying evidence.

## Depression

Peter Biskind, in his book<sup>206</sup> about supernova filmmakers of the 1970s, tells how Hal Ashby, who, after "*The Last Detail*," "*Shampoo*" and "*Coming Home*," became the saddest casualty of his era and once contemplated drowning himself in the ocean. Because this is a perfect Hollywood story, Ashby needed to shop for the right bathing suit in order to commit suicide properly. And when he couldn't find it, he didn't follow through.<sup>207</sup>

Judy Garland married five times, struggled constantly with depression and died of a barbiturate overdose in 1969 at the age of 47. From the time Judy and her sisters were 10 years old, their mother had given pep pills to all three of her daughters – "to keep these girls going!" – on audition trips. She then gave them sleeping pills in the evening. MGM compounded the problem, of course, with its constant pressure on the adolescent Judy to lose weight.

The only girl in Los Angeles with her own stomach pump, Judy's daughter Liza (later Minnelli) probably saved Judy's life on several occasions, climbing in her bathroom window when she suspected she had taken an overdose, and once even holding on to her feet when she was threatening to jump from a hotel window.

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<sup>206</sup> Biskind's "Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex-Drugs-and-Rock 'n' Roll Generation Saved Hollywood" (Simon & Schuster) is the best of three new books about Hollywood under the influence. The others are Peter Fonda's tumultuous memoir, "Don't Tell Dad" (Hyperion), and Charles Fleming's "High Concept: Don Simpson and the Hollywood Culture of Excess" (Doubleday).

<sup>207</sup> May 5, 1998, adapted from Janet Maslin in N.Y. Times

Norma Jeane Baker became famous for playing Marilyn Monroe. Her short, unhappy life led to growing despair, leading to drug addiction and paranoia. She finally took a fatal dose of barbiturates and ended her life as Marilyn Monroe had ended hers.

### **Drugs, alcohol and excess**

“And then we all went into the walk-in closet and got high,” Fonda typically reports. Fonda’s tales of the drug haze that yielded “*Easy Rider*” may sound akin to those surrounding Simpson, the Caligula-like 1980’s producer who alphabetized his drugs by the closetful and whose prescription bills may have run as high as \$75,000 a month (according to one estimate in Fleming’s book). ...

“Altman took to grass like a Guernsey.”<sup>208</sup>

Elizabeth Taylor is a recovered alcoholic. Elizabeth’s first marriage was to Richard Taylor. Richard and Elizabeth traveled with retinues, like royalty. They made memorable scenes and drank one another into stupors and blackouts. But Richard was often physically abusive to Elizabeth, making up to her by buying her the most fabulous gifts. They divorced, remarried one another, divorced again. Burton died, at 58, of his exhaustingly bad habits.

Elizabeth has suffered several addictions going through so many rehabs, and subsequent relapses, and re-rehabs.

Arthur Laurents, the distinguished 82-year-old playwright, director and screenwriter began his remarkable career in 1940 and went on to triumph with his superb books for the musicals “*West Side Story*” and “*Gypsy*,” as well as the scripts for the movies “*The Way We Were*” and “*The Turning Point*.” In his memoirs, “*Original Story By*,” Laurents describes himself as often taking advantage of everything and “about once a month” feeling like a “fraud.” He lives with his longtime male partner, and describes mixing with a group of very smart, insatiably ambitious gay men who drank a lot and “loved to dope” – Laurents admits to living to excess.

### **Violence**

It has been more than 35 years since Janet Leigh saw herself on the screen in Alfred Hitchcock’s classic horror film *Psycho*. After viewing the famous shower scene, in which she was repeatedly stabbed, Leigh was seized with an overwhelming and lasting terror.

“I stopped taking showers, and even now I take only baths,” she says. In fact, when the actress stays in a hotel or at a friend’s home where only a shower is available, she panics. “I make sure the doors and windows of the house are locked,” she says, “and I leave the bathroom door and shower curtain open. I’m always facing the door, watching no matter where the shower head is.”<sup>209</sup>

Stephen King: The object for me as a writer is ... to get to you, to scare you so badly you won’t be able to go to sleep without leaving the bathroom light on. It’s about making you believe what I believe, at least for a little while.<sup>210</sup>

### **Arrogance**

Biskind writes ... Bogdanovich worried to Woody Allen, who has managed to have the rare auteur’s career that the new breed once dreamed of, about which name ought to go first on the credits for “*Daisy Miller*,” his own or Henry James.

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Bernard Weintraub in New York Times reported in *Reader’s Digest*

<sup>210</sup> Stephen King, *Nightmares and Dreamscapes* as reported in *Reader’s Digest*

After winning an Oscar for “*The French Connection*,” William Friedkin reportedly complained to a psychiatrist that he had not yet equaled Shostakovich’s Seventh Symphony or Beethoven’s Fifth.<sup>211</sup>

### **Materialism and hedonism<sup>212</sup>**

A friend recalls that Coppola was fond of saying, “It takes no imagination to live within your means.”

### **Greed and dishonesty**

Tom King wrote a book about Hollywood mogul David Geffen called *The Operator: David Geffen Builds, Buys, and Sells the New Hollywood*. King reconstructs a trail of lies, petty fibs and tactical liaisons. Geffen, we are told, fabricated evidence of an U.C.L.A. degree, claimed he was related to the producer Phil Spector and made up a story about his mother’s having breast cancer after he was caught pilfering mail from the William Morris mailroom. King sees the young Geffen as a “con artist” with a nearly limitless “lust for cash.”

King writes that Geffen’s story is characteristic of the Hollywood scene in general. Geffen, and others like him, were successful because he understood how stardom could be leveraged into power and financial gain. Geffen once told a friend that he thought he had accomplished everything he had wanted to achieve, but that somehow the money and the fame was unfulfilling.

### **Infidelity**

Sonny Bono, who was having an affair with a woman named Connie Foreman, became incensed when he learned that Cher had taken a new lover. So acceptable is marital infidelity in these circles that when the famous Cher fell out with her husband Sonny Bono, the divorce claims on either side did not focus on the fact that both had been unfaithful to each other. (Cher’s claim was that Bono was a dictator who had made her life a living hell. He had destabilized her to the point that she could hardly eat or sleep. She was anemic and had been driven so hard by the grind of TV tapings, Las Vegas engagements, and recording sessions that she frequently fell ill. From time to time, the exhaustion forced her to be hospitalized. Yet despite this they had decided to continue to live together so that they could continue their show together and continue to make money!) One night after their act, Cher told Bono that she was in love with their guitar player, Bill Hamm. Bono freaked out as Cher informed him she wanted out of their marriage. He convinced her that the two were bonded inextricably in a highly profitable business. It made sense, he told her, to keep up the facade of a happy marriage if only for the sake of their bank accounts.

Cher’s only escape was to shop, and it was an art she had perfected.

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<sup>211</sup> Betsy Streisand wrote the following article in U.S. News & World Report, February 19, 2001, *And the winner is ...*

The entertainment industry bestowed a whopping 4,065 trophies, plaques, and statuettes upon itself last year at a record 564 awards ceremonies. That’s up 65 percent over the previous year and amounts to an Oscar, Grammy, Emmy, Pixie, Moxie, Webby, Golden Nymph, or Starfish every two hours for 365 days straight. Think of it, says Timothy Gray, a columnist for the entertainment trade paper *Variety*, which tracks the trophy mania. “Can you imagine the UAW handing out an award to a worker every time a car rolls off the assembly line?”

<sup>212</sup> Arthur Laurents, the distinguished 82-year-old playwright, director and screenwriter began his remarkable career in 1940 and went on to triumph with his superb books for the musicals “*West Side Story*” and “*Gypsy*,” as well as the scripts for the movies “*The Way We Were*” and “*The Turning Point*.” In his memoir, “*Original Story By*,” Laurents describes himself as often taking advantage of everything and “about once a month” feeling like a “fraud.” He lives with his longtime male partner, and describes mixing with a group of very smart, insatiably ambitious gay men who drank a lot and “loved to dope” – Laurents admits to living to excess. The only thing he says he ever really felt guilty about was his conflicted sexuality, until a wise psychiatrist named Judd Marmor told him, “Whoever or whatever you are, what matters is that you lead your life with pride and dignity.”

Elizabeth Taylor, who is one of the greatest legends in Hollywood (she has starred in over 60 movies), has been married and divorced a whopping eight times. She began her relationship with several of her husbands-to-be while still married to a previous man. These men in turn were also married. She now claims that she will never get married again.

### **Unsuccessful parenting**

Kirk Douglas, *Climbing the Mountain – My search for meaning*:

At the age of thirty-two, Gregory Peck's son ended his life with a bullet. At a similar age, the son of a very dear friend of mine, the producer Ray Stark, jumped out of a window. Paul Newman's died of a drug overdose. Producer George Englund's son died from the same thing. Marlon Brando's son murdered his sister's lover. She had been in and out of mental institutions; then she committed suicide. Louis Jordan's son committed suicide by drowning. Carol Burnett's daughter overdosed on drugs. Charles Boyer's son, Carroll O'Connor's son-both took their own lives. And so it goes, on and on. (pg. 156-7)

All my kids have gone through some form of therapy. ... Michael and Joel both checked into Sierra Tucson for alcohol abuse. (pg. 157)

### **Political bias**

Hollywood is generally on the far left in terms of the messages it puts into movies.

The following is based on John Leo in *U.S. News and World Report*, April, 2000:

Oscar week is a good time to reflect on how unlike the rest of the country the movie industry is. In Hollywood's America, virtually all the gay characters are so noble that they make Mother Teresa look sleazy. Any character in uniform, on the other hand, is a good bet to commit some awful felony. In any film wholly about the military (*A Few Good Men*, for instance, or *The General's Daughter*), lower-ranking people are allowed to be relatively sane but only if they work to expose criminal insanity at the top. (*Saving Private Ryan* was a big exception; how did it slip past the radar?)

Bigot from central casting. A related problem is Hollywood's inability to imagine principled political views different from its own. Take the TV show *The West Wing*, which is basically a soap opera about what the Clinton White House might have looked like if Clinton had been principled and vaguely monogamous. It's an interesting show, and I watch it when I can. But when I watch, I realize I am inside the Hollywood brain stem. I am like an atheist reading a Graham Greene novel about a tormented priest. In *West Wing*, all the good people of America are liberal Democrats. Everyone else is part of the problem. When a staffer goes on a Crossfire-type show with a conservative minister, we all know what to expect: The minister turns out to be an anti-Semitic, anti-abortion bigot who doesn't even know the Ten Commandments.

Sometimes the Hollywood message machine runs off the rails. Norman Jewison made a terrible mess of *The Hurricane* and was clearly punished for it – no Oscar nominations for the movie itself, just the one for Denzel Washington. Jewison took "Hurricane" Carter, a mediocre boxer with a substantial criminal record, who may or may not have committed the three murders he was charged with, and converted him into a character who is half Jesus Christ, half Nelson Mandela. In the movie, Carter never does one thing wrong. He is a lifelong victim of white racism. Even a fight that Carter clearly lost, by nearly all accounts, is presented as a victory stolen by ringside racists. Jewison took the conventional Hollywood line but stretched the truth way too far and, amazingly, got slapped down.

Hollywood is much prouder of another message movie, *The Cider House Rules*. On the surface, it's about the mentoring relationship between the Michael Caine character, who runs an orphanage in Maine in the 1940s, and his young protege, the Tobey Maguire character. But the movie is really about abortion. The Caine character performs abortions on demand and is furious that his protege will not. There is no room for moral uncertainty. Performing abortions is elevated to an absolute moral duty. Not performing them is corrupt. No wonder Planned Parenthood is showing the film at fundraisers.

The problem is not that the movie is pro-abortion, but that a difficult moral issue is so crudely manipulated to illustrate a political stance. This movie could never be made in reverse, with an abortionist developing moral qualms and stopping. The political terrain here is the same as in the White House of *An American President* and *West Wing*: Opponents of the Hollywood belief system are just plain wrong. How many times do they have to tell us this before we get the message?

### **Positive attributes**

We can all cite endless examples of extraordinary actors who have done extraordinary things for the world: Aubrey Hepburn and her work for UNICEF; Elizabeth Taylor and her work for AIDS causes; Paul Newman and his fight against drugs, as well as countless contributions to many charities; Robert Redford and his efforts to help independent filmmakers through his Sundance Institute; Steven Spielberg and his support of Holocaust organizations. I could go on and on. (Kirk Douglas, *Climbing the Mountain*, pg. 197.)

### **c- Truth**

Selwyn Raab in the *N.Y. Times* December 28, 1999 reported on the movie "*The Hurricane*":

In 1966 two black men stormed into a Paterson, NJ, tavern and unleashed a barrage of gunfire that killed the bartender and two patrons, all white. Soon after, Hurricane Carter, a contender for the middleweight boxing championship, was convicted of the crime and imprisoned for 19 years in a case that was eventually overturned in a landmark ruling.

The struggle of Mr. Carter, whose first name is Rubin, for exoneration is the subject of "*The Hurricane*," a film directed by Norman Jewison, with Denzel Washington portraying the boxer whose compelling real-life story touches on thorny issues of race, civil rights and celebrity involvement in criminal trials.

"*The Hurricane*," which opens tomorrow, is being billed as "the triumphant true story of an innocent man's 20-year fight for justice." But the discrepancy between the "true story" and what is seen on screen raises serious questions about how Hollywood presents actual events and the liberties taken with the truth.

The movie presents a false vision of the legal battles and personal struggles that led to his freedom and creates spurious heroes in fictionalized episodes that attribute his vindication to members of a Canadian commune who unearth long suppressed evidence.

While glorifying the Canadians, the film plays down the heroic efforts of the lawyers whose strategy finally won the day for Mr. Carter. And virtually obliterated in the film version is the vital role played by John Artis, Mr. Carter's co-defendant, who was also wrongly convicted and imprisoned for 15 years.

Two films in this decade, "*J.F.K.*," Oliver Stone's conspiracy version of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, and "*The Insider*," an account of the perils of a tobacco-industry whistle-blower, directed by Michael Mann, have also provoked debates over skewed history torn from headlines.

Of course filmmakers have always taken dramatic license, simplifying history and conflating characters and events for narrative purposes. They defend their interpretations by emphasizing that their films are not documentaries but vivid adaptations of complex stories that retain the essence if not the literal truth of important events that would otherwise be unknown to the huge audiences that movies attract.

Whatever its intentions, “*The Hurricane*” falls into the category of history contorted for dramatic effect.<sup>213</sup>

Also on the issue of truth the following are edited excerpts from a group moderated by Janet Maslin, *N.Y Times* film critic, reported in the *N.Y. Times*, May, 2 1999.<sup>214</sup> Maslin started by pointing out the challenges of maintaining the truth even in documentary movies. It’s altered in feature films by digital effects and so many other illusions. And it’s more and more compromised when sound bytes make up television news.

Burns: Werner Herzog showed me this really wonderful film about religion in Russia today. In one magnificent scene, men crawled across the ice of this ancient lake because underneath was supposed to be some mystical spiritual city. It was an incredibly great scene we’d all kill to get. At the end, we said, “Werner, this was terrific.” And he said, “Well, those guys were just two drunks.” And it looked like these religious penitents! For an artist as exceptional as Werner, it was all right to fake stuff. But most of us would have a great deal of difficulty doing this.

When we begin to manipulate images, nothing is true. Once James Cameron can make anything appear in a scene, it’s not so much that we need to be suspicious of Cameron – he’s a great entertainer. But the value of our own things becomes suspect.

Maslin: That, and the ever-shortening attention span, are a blight on fiction filmmaking.

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<sup>213</sup> A major fabrication is the creation of a racist Javert-type detective who hounds Mr. Carter from the age of 11 until he finally ensnares him in the triple homicide. The film brands the phantom detective as primarily responsible for framing Mr. Carter. The actual story is more harrowing because it exposes an underlying frailty in a criminal-justice system that convicted Mr. Carter, not once but twice. The convictions were obtained not by a lone, malevolent investigator but by a network of detectives, prosecutors and judges who countenanced the suppression and tainting of evidence and the injection of racial bias into the courtroom.

The film also sterilizes Mr. Carter’s history before his arrest for murder. He is characterized as a nearly model citizen who overcame persecution as a juvenile and remade himself as a boxer and civil rights advocate. What is omitted is that Mr. Carter served four years in prison as an adult for three muggings, crimes that later tarnished him as potentially violent and damaged his cause in the murder case. And while the film would have audiences believe that Mr. Carter was a teetotaler, he never denied taking part in an occasional pub brawl and, although married, having a romantic fling. One of those night owl excursions enmeshed him in the murders, a fact obscured in the movie.

The forgotten man of the film is Mr. Artis, the other defendant, whose life was almost destroyed. Seen only briefly, Mr. Artis is portrayed as a clueless youth. The only recognition given to him is a brief prison encounter when Mr. Denzel suddenly addresses him as “my hero.” In reality Mr. Artis defiantly rejected an offer to avoid a long prison sentence by falsely incriminating Mr. Carter. Many defense supporters were also drawn to the case because of their faith in Mr. Artis, who had an unblemished reputation and no police record.

<sup>214</sup> The other members of the group were:

D. A. Pennebaker, who gained fame in the late 60’s with a film about Bob Dylan (“Don’t Look Back”); Chris Hegedus, his partner, with whom he recorded the backstage shenanigans of a presidential campaign (“The War Room”) and a Broadway opening (“Moon Over Broadway”); Frederick Wiseman, whose career began in 1967 with an unflinching look at an insane asylum (“Titicut Follies”) and whose camera has since investigated such diverse subjects as a hospital intensive care unit (“Near Death”) and the workings of a public housing project (“Public Housing”); Barbara Kopple, whose “Harlan County, U.S.A.” tracked the struggle of striking Kentucky coal miners and whose subsequent films have included portraits of Mike Tyson (“Fallen Champ”) and Woody Allen (“Wild Man Blues”); Ken Burns, whose historical series on baseball and the Civil War were shown to great acclaim on public television, and Rory Kennedy, a relative newcomer whose documentary on Appalachia, “American Hollow,” opens on May 26, 2000, at the Film Forum.

Maslin: Albert Maysles, who couldn't make it here today, spoke of the fact that it appears that there are many more opportunities to have documentaries shown on television. But actually it's not all that helpful if they're one-hour biographies of movie stars.

Burns: But even those one-hour biographies are so chopped up by most of the venues: every six to eight minutes you've got a commercial. The principal reason that I work through public television is that you can get two hours of uninterrupted attention. In the end, all meaning in our lives accrues in duration.

D. A. Pennebaker: But if what they're doing doesn't seem really very crucial to them, they become compliant with what they suspect you want them to do. You can get tricked by totally false drama.

Wiseman: But it's no different for anybody who has to deal with a lot of people. If you're a teacher or a doctor or a lawyer or a journalist, you have to have a good sense of when someone is trying to con you. And the same thing is true when you're making one of these movies. If you think somebody's putting it on for the camera, you stop shooting. If you don't realize it until you get to the editing room, you don't use it.

Burns: Television is the culprit: we have become more and more a community restless and impatient with anything longer than six or eight minutes. And then we need to be sold something, or told we'd be better off if we bought something. As a result, we've shunted into a corner a much more interesting film world. What Hollywood turns out in endless repetition is in fact a rather narrow format of conventions.

Kennedy: ... Advertisers aren't willing to get behind documentaries, and distributors and broadcasters aren't willing to put the marketing money behind documentaries. There would be a much greater audience if that push were there.

Burns: Well, this is what any of us here would never tolerate – and why I've stayed in public television. Because no one at *PBS* says "longer," "shorter," "sexier," "more violent," anything. Nobody can come into my editing room to tell me how to make a movie.

Maslin: When you all see a Hollywood movie where millions of dollars are going up in smoke right in front of your eyes, do you find it frustrating?

Hegedus: It can be very frustrating when you see a movie that's really bad.

Burns: And they've spent more on that film than you've spent in 20 years of making documentary films.

Wiseman: You could make five films for the lunch money.

Burns: But the sad thing is that once, not too long ago, nobody ever talked about opening grosses, how much a film made.

Maslin: In independent films in the last 10 years, where there's been an infusion of so much money, some of the integrity has been lost. And the lack of a market, I think, has also had a positive effect.

Maslin: Doesn't it make you wild when you see a report on Kosovo that's two minutes long?

Burns: That's the fundamental failure of this world in which everything is reduced to a one-dimensional simplistic judgment. It is in fact ambiguity that drives all of this stuff out there. And these films barely skim the surface.

**d- The vastness of the movie industry**

It is hard to appreciate the enormous scope of the movie industry. The cost of making movies is staggering. The movie *Wild Wild West*, for example, made, in the first few months of its release in 1999 over a hundred million dollars. But it is estimated that the movie cost close to two hundred million dollars. It costs twenty-five million dollars just to open a picture that first weekend nowadays.

But Hollywood isn't just about generating and spending money. Its cultural and financial implications extend throughout society. The film industry has spawned a whole range of secondary industries. Firstly there is a large magazine industry. In the United States *Film Quarterly*, *Wide Angle*, *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, and *Cinema Journal* have great influence, just as *Screen* does in England and *Bianco e Nero* in Italy. As a country, France has made cinema a central part of its culture. The French *Cahiers du Cinéma* sustains several times the circulation of the U.S. *Film Quarterly* and is rivaled by several other serious journals and countless magazines. Aiming at a less specialized but still avid film audience, glossy magazines such as *American Film* in the United States and *Sight and Sound* in England mix serious reviews, interviews, and features. There are similar publications in Poland and India. Popular magazines, which lure a large readership with their blend of pictures and gossip, have always been a part of movie culture, as have trade papers such as *Variety*.

Books about the cinema range from serious studies of its economic, sociological, and technical aspects to light memoirs, ephemeral gossip, and innumerable biographies and autobiographies of actresses, actors, producers, and directors. Monumental film histories and theories written by Sergey Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, André Bazin, Lewis Jacobs, Georges Sadoul, and others have triggered a remarkable industry of book publishing on these topics in many countries. The U.S.-based Society for Cinema Studies enrolls more than 500 teachers of film, who read these books and recommend titles to students. Most major university libraries now routinely collect film books and periodicals. There are also specialized institutes such as the British Film Institute, the special collections libraries at the University of California at Los Angeles and the University of Southern California, the Margaret Herrick Library of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Beverly Hills, California, and the Lincoln Center Library in New York City. Other institutions house important documentation along with archives of films. The International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House in Rochester, N.Y., is particularly rich in material on the early cinema, while the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research in Madison has gathered data pertaining to its collection of films produced by Warner Bros., RKO, and United Artists. The earliest film archive was the Swedish Film History Collection begun in 1933. Archives in Paris, London, and New York City followed shortly afterward. An international federation (FIAF – Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film) was founded with headquarters in Paris in 1938.

During the 1960's and 1970's there developed a tremendous interest in old movies. Revival houses sprang up in most major U.S. cities, and distribution companies were established solely for the re-issue of old films.

Besides all this there are film societies, film festivals, and awards. The film club or ciné-club often contains many luminaries from the film world and other arts. The Film Society of London, for example, was founded in 1925 by H.G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw, Augustus John, John Maynard Keynes, and other dignitaries who wanted to see French, German, and Soviet pictures that commercial exhibitors did not handle. The movement spread rapidly, and cinema was included in several international art forums, beginning with the 1925 Paris

Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes that launched Art Deco. There, for several months, a history of cinema played in the Grand Palais and was accompanied by lectures on technique and appreciation of motion pictures. Specialized theaters in major cities began to cater to ciné-club audiences. In most countries film societies eventually attached themselves to universities. In the 1980's the availability of videocassettes further dissolved the strength of the ciné-club by allowing would-be members to select their own films for viewing at times convenient to them.

Then there are film festivals. The Cannes Festival was founded after World War II, followed by festivals in Berlin, Moscow, Karlovy Vary, Czech., London, San Francisco, Chicago and New York City. By the early 1980's there were more than 100 scheduled annually in some 25 different countries.

And of course there are the famous Academy Awards or Oscars voted each year since 1929 by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Serious students of the film tend to place more credence in the awards of the New York Film Critics (founded in 1935), and the National Society of Film Critics (1966), as well as in the oldest U.S. reviewing organization, the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures (1909). (Information from Britannica)

#### **e- Movies as a source of immoral lessons**

(See above where we dealt with the values and character of Hollywood actors.)

Hollywood has always been morally problematic. Even seemingly harmless dialogues often show a lack of character. Consider the lines “where I spit no grass grows,” “your skin makes the Rocky Mountains look like chiffon velvet,” and “chin up – that’s right, both of them,” taken from a recent movie.

Especially after World War I, when Hollywood began spinning out whole film cycles devoted to the sins of wild youth, dancing daughters, straying wives, and dark seducers, the moral guardians tried their damndest to break up the parade of wastrels marching in the vanguard of the Jazz Age assault on Victorian values. In 1922, after a cascade of sordid scandals off screen and shocking antics on screen, their agitations compelled studio executives to recruit Presbyterian elder and model of probity Will H. Hays, postmaster general from the administration of Warren G. Harding, to clean up, or at least put a more respectable face on, the motion picture industry. The most significant pact between the censors and the censurable was the Production Code itself, adopted in 1930 to roll back the profligacy of the 1920's and set a reformed America again on the path of righteousness in the new, harsher decade.

On the universality of Hollywood cinema, both the censors and the studios agreed: everyone goes to the movies. “Most arts appeal to the mature,” declared the Code. “This art appeals at once to every class – mature, immature, developed, undeveloped, law-abiding, criminal.” Given the nature of the mass medium, an “adults only” policy would never be “completely satisfactory” and “only partially effective” even were Hollywood willing to shut out its most loyal customers, the young and gregarious.

A reformist educational group called the Motion Picture Research Council published a series of reports linking bad behavior to bad movies.

On or about July 1934 American cinema changed. During that month, the Production Code Administration, popularly known as the Hays Office, began to regulate, systematically and scrupulously, the content of Hollywood motion pictures. For the next thirty years, cinematic space was a patrolled landscape with secure perimeters and well-defined borders. Adopted under duress at the urging of priests and politicians, Hollywood's in-house policy of self-

ensorship set the boundaries for what could be seen, heard, even implied on screen. Not until the mid-1950's did cracks appear in the structure and not until 1968, when the motion picture industry adopted its alphabet ratings system, did the Code edifice finally come crumbling down.

For four years – from March 31, 1930, when the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America formally pledged to abide by the Production Code, until July 2, 1934, when the MPPDA empowered the Production Code Administration to enforce it – compliance with the Code was a verbal agreement that, as producer Samuel Goldwyn might have said, wasn't worth the paper it was written on. Pre-Code Hollywood did not adhere to the strict regulations on matters of sex, vice, violence, and moral meaning forced upon the balance of Hollywood cinema.

*NYT* February 25, 2000 by Bill Carter:

Andy Grushow, the chairman of the Fox Television Entertainment Group who canceled “*Who Wants to Marry a Multimillionaire?*” last week after it blew up in Fox's face, said yesterday that he wanted to avoid the kind of “exploitative material” that resulted in the multimillionaire show, which was transformed in a matter of days last week from a ratings phenomenon to a public relations fiasco. On the show, a multimillionaire interviewed strange women and then agreed to marry one of them, all on the air.

If he carried out his plan, Mr. Grushow would be altering what, in recent years, has become a major part of the Fox brand image. Fox began using the shows in 1995 to fill holes in its schedule after the success of a special called “*Alien Autopsy: Fact or Fiction.*” In five years, Fox has generated more than 70 such specials, including “*When Animals Attack,*” “*World's Scariest Police Shootouts*” and “*World's Most Shocking Moments Caught on Tape.*”

If the network performs poorly during sweeps months, Mr. Grushow might be under pressure from Fox's own local stations and affiliates, which rely on the network to deliver audiences into their late-night newscasts, a significant part of their revenue base. The stations use sweeps ratings to set advertising rates.

The multimillionaire show became an instant phenomenon, attracting 23 million viewers and instigating a national debate about love and money. But almost instantly questions began to be raised about the groom, Rick Rockwell, who had once been the subject of a restraining order for threatening a fiancée.

Since Mr. Grushow became chairman in November, he eliminated a special that would have crashed a 747 live into a desert. Mr. Grushow said he also jettisoned a list of 10 other specials that had been ordered, including such titles as “*World's Nastiest Neighbors*” and “*Plastic Surgery Nightmares.*”

But “*Who Wants to Marry a Multimillionaire?*” survived because it fell into what Mr. Grushow described as “entertainment-oriented” specials.

One of the coming shows, “*Big Brother,*” set for *CBS*, will be about a group of people locked up in the same house together.

But even after 1934, the Code seal stamped on Alfred Hitchcock's *Notorious* (1946) did not keep Ingrid Bergman and Cary Grant from simmering with erotic passion and flaunting the sacrament of marriage.<sup>215</sup> However, from that time on, Joseph I. Breen, a former newspaperman and influential Roman Catholic layman became chief of the Production Code

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<sup>215</sup> Excerpts from Pre-code Hollywood, Sex, Immorality, and Insurrection in American Cinema, 1930-1934 by Thomas Doherty (Columbia University Press )

Administration until 1954. As such he became one of the most influential figures in American culture. Upon his death in 1965, *Variety* summed up Breen's preeminent role: "More than any single individual, he shaped the moral stature of the American motion picture."

Breen wanted to remake American cinema into a positive force for good, to imbue it with a transcendent sense of virtue and order. To earn Breen's imprimatur, the moral meaning of the picture needed to be clear, edifying, and preferably Catholic. Not for nothing was he called the "supreme pontiff of motion picture morals." Hollywood might show the evil that men do but only if it were vanquished by the last reel, with the guilty punished and the sinner redeemed. "Compensating moral value," Breen called it, the dictum that "any theme must contain at least sufficient good in the story to compensate for, and to counteract, any evil which it relates."

*NY Times*, September 27, 2000:

A top entertainment executive told the Senate today that it was a "judgment lapse" for his movie company to try to advertise a film with violent scenes on a children's television network.

The executive, Mel Harris, president and chief operating officer of Sony Pictures Entertainment, defended his company in another instance when children aged 9 to 11 were interviewed as part of the test marketing of a violent R-rated movie. But Mr. Harris said Columbia Pictures, a subsidiary of Sony, would no longer use under-age children in focus groups unless they were accompanied by their parents.

Mr. Harris was one of eight executives from the country's largest movie studios who testified today before the Senate commerce committee about the marketing of violent movies to children.

Four of the eight (not including Mr. Harris) promised they will stop appealing to children younger than 17 in their marketing of R-rated films. But the other four said they could not make such a promise because it was appropriate for some children under 17 to see some R-rated movies, like "*Saving Private Ryan*" or "*Amistad*," with their parents.

The Motion Picture Association of America announced new voluntary steps to limit the marketing of adult-rated movies to children. Senator John McCain, the Arizona Republican who heads the commerce committee, was critical of the new policy. "I don't understand this language," Mr. McCain said. "It is filled with loopholes."

### *xiii- Art, music and culture*

#### **a- Art**

Up until the 20th Century it was believed that the purpose of art was to make people more sensitive and appreciative of the world around them. But, in particular in the last part of the 20th Century there was a complete collapse of this idea. Typical of modern attitudes is the French poet Rimbaud who famously sought the “disordering of all the senses” to turn himself into a voyant, a seer. Rimbaud’s ambition, still very much with us today, is part of what Shattuck describes as “the prevailing romantic dogma ... that the artist must be an outlaw and pariah engaged in transgression, violence and crime in order to plumb the depths of his genius.”<sup>216</sup> Today, art is regarded as an independent experience, divorced from any objective moral or social sensitivities. But as the German art historian Hans Sedlmayr stated it, “art cannot be assessed by a measure that is purely artistic,” because “such a purely artistic measure, which ignored the human element, the element which alone gives art its justification, would actually not be an artistic measure at all. It would merely be an esthetic one, and actually the application of purely esthetic standards is one of the peculiarly inhuman features of the age.”<sup>217</sup>

An extreme example of this is Robert Mapplethorpe, whose work included sadomasochistic and honerotic photographs, pictures of nude children and of violent and homosexual poses. Some of his work is so graphic that, had authorities chosen to do so, they could have prosecuted him for child pornography, which has no First Amendment Protection. Despite the pornographic nature of his work, the National Endowment for the Arts partly subsidized a Mapplethorpe showing with a \$30,000 grant at the Corcoran Gallery of Art.<sup>218</sup> That was way back in 1989 when the outcry was still enough to get the show cancelled. But by then the NEA was already enmeshed in controversy over an earlier grant of \$15,000 to photographer Andres Serrano among whose works is a picture entitled *Piss Christ*, depicting a crucifix submerged in the artist’s urine. After the Mapplethorpe cancellation, the Washington Project for the Arts started shopping around for a museum willing to represent the Mapplethorpe

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<sup>216</sup> *Candor and Perversion, Literature, Education, and the Arts*, by Roger Shattuck. (Illustrated. 415 pp. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. \$29.95) Reviewed in the N.Y. Times Book Review by Roger Kimball, Oct 24, 1999

<sup>217</sup> The following is a quote from my book, *The Prism*: But it is just this subjectification of the aesthetic realm, the ‘it feels good to me’ syndrome, which has led to the loss of any objective standard. In Europe, this loss has been explained as a result of the shattering of traditional values and beliefs after World War I. David Thompson puts it like this: “For the artist the starting point of his quest for truth and beauty is his own sensitivity to experience. ... The more perplexed he is by experience ... the more experimental, esoteric, and introspective is his style likely to become. ... The shattering of traditional values and established beliefs which occurred in war and revolution was accompanied by a wholesale abandonment of traditional taste and technique. This type of explanation fails on two accounts. It fails to account for the same phenomena occurring in the United States (see Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*) and it fails to account for the shocking loss of genius and greatness in this area. Anyone who has the slightest idea of what it means to create a symphony piece with themes and sub-themes involving the counterpoint and harmony of an entire orchestra can only gasp at the genius involved. What sort of a mental grasp can hold a picture of all of that simultaneously in his head translating it into the specific notes which each instrument must play? Whatever our music preference is, we don’t gasp at the genius behind the Beatles. On the contrary, they have proven to be a rather easy model to follow for thousands of bands in their wake. The reduction of all artistic values to one – originality – ironically proves to be the key to early imitation. The architect who thought his building stuck out (as if that is what buildings are supposed to do) suddenly finds that he is copied in Hong Kong, Tel Aviv and Los Angeles. The collapse of art forms of the caliber of a Brahms or a Renoir requires a sensitive and detailed analysis beyond the scope of the present work. What is obvious however, is that the whole world of traditional culture, which included both philosophy and art, spiraled down to the market demands of the box office.

<sup>218</sup> Time, July 3 1989

exhibit, and a laser artist announced plans to project images of Mapplethorpe's photos on the Corcoran Gallery's facade.

The overall level of art continued to decline. In 2003, the City of London displayed an outside piece of art that was essentially a toilet encased in one-glass so that those using it could see out but outsiders could not see in. In 1992 an exhibition at Moca featured a new level of pointless conceptual art: *Time* magazine<sup>219</sup> reported on Richard Jackson's room, whose walls and ceiling are covered with hundreds of clocks, all telling the same time; or with a tiny smidgen more sculptural content, Liz Lerner's visually inert installations of hanging chains and mirrors. Charles Ray does fiber-glass mannequins that look like dumb footnotes to the far more exacting work Duane Hanson and John De Andrea were making 20 years ago. Nancy Rubins would like you to know that she is scared by the production of junk in our bulimic, gorge-and-puke culture, and so she constructs a huge semi-random object out of trailer home and hot-water boilers, laced together with steel cable.

Cris Burden's *Medusa's Head*, a six-ton lump of scarred, dyed concrete and rocks laced by serpentine model-train tracks and hanging by a chain- a fearful image of a terminally polluted plant. Nothing else in Moca measures up to Burden. Size is not scale, a fact almost forgotten by American artists.

When Mike Kelley builds a set of offices and covers their walls with blowups of the kind of semi-dirty-joke drawings that people in the mailroom fax to one another to relieve the boredom of the workday, what kind of point is being made.

But there was more to come when a show called *Sensation* was displayed by the prestigious Royal Academy of Arts in London: 44 Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection seeing what they can get away with. Damien Hirst was on hand with several of his trade mark dead animals preserved in big vitrines. Another – a smelly cow's head being devoured by flies – isn't aging so well. Marc Quinn shows a refrigerated self-portrait head, cast in several pints of his own frozen blood. And the Chapman brothers, Dinos and Jake, have been given a whole room in which to stage "*Tragic Anatomies*" – a bunch of nude Jon Benet-like mannequins mutated into two-headed and four legged creatures seemingly having sex with themselves.

The piece they're asking about most is a 12-by-9 foot picture of the infamous Myra Hindley. She is the "Moors Murderess" who helped torture and kill several youngsters back in the 1960's. The monochrome painting is done in a mosaic of simulated children's handprints by an untalented artist named Marcus Harvey. (His other works in *Sensation* are pictures of spread-legged nude women made cutely illegible by piling on the paint, abstract expressionist style.) The mother of one of Hindley's victims begged the Academy not to show the picture. Hindley herself – now seeking low profile release – has also objected. A couple of Academicians resigned over the matter and last Thursday protesters spattered the picture with eggs. Many in England are calling for the resignation of the R.A.'s exhibitions director, Norman Rosenthal.

They and other art stunners in *Sensation* obscure a couple of real finds in the show: Ron Mueck's surreal "Dead Dad," a four-foot tour de force sculpture of a sad, naked middle-aged corpse, and Richard Billingham's chillingly touching photos of his dysfunctional parents in action (obese, tattooed Mum beats up on weak, drunken Pa). Sensationalism also overrides the quieter, more gifted art of Rachel Whiteread (a ghostly full-size plaster cast of an entirely empty room.)

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<sup>219</sup> April 20, 1992

Serrano's "Piss Christ" made it right to the end of the millenium when it was displayed by the Whitney Museum (NEA supported of course). At the same time, the Brooklyn Museum of Art was exhibiting Chris Ofili's elephant-dung-ornamented painting "The Holy Virgin Mary" as a part of *Sensation*.<sup>220</sup> The *N.Y. Times* (October 9, 1999) reported that, in response to the latter, New York mayor Rudolph Guilliani tried to stop city funding to the Brooklyn Museum but was given a court order not to do so. The court claimed that this would be an interference in the freedom of speech of the museum. Meanwhile the New York State Council on the Arts continued to support the Film Society of Lincoln Center. This week its film festival screened "Dogma," a movie condemned by the Catholic League because "God is played by a singer known for her nude videos and songs about oral sex".

The Brooklyn Museum's show *Sensation* was assembled by a private collector, the British advertising tycoon Charles Saatchi, and much of it is kitsch. The Museum's own cynicism is evident in its vulgar marketing campaign (almost nostalgically reminiscent of those at the dawn of X-rated movies), its abdication of any curatorial input, and even its camp audio tour narrated by David Bowie (who intones of the elephant dung, "On a damp day its rich, earthy scent wafts elusively around [Mr. Ofili's] works"). In an era of empty blockbuster repackagings of Impressionists and a Guggenheim Museum homage to the sculptural finesse of Harley-Davidson motorcycles, the best to be said in the Brooklyn Museum's defense is that its craven embrace of showmanship is far from an anomaly.

Only a few yards from "The Holy Virgin Mary" in Brooklyn is another Ofili canvas, "Afrodizzia" which inscribes the names Cassius Clay, Miles Davis and Diana Ross, among other black icons, on brown clumps interchangeable with those decorating the "Virgin Mary." Mr. Ofili is nothing if not an equal-opportunity dung artist.

The Daily Telegraph, Thursday, December 2, 2004<sup>221</sup>: ...A gentlemen's urinal has been voted the single most influential work of art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. ...Marcel Duchamp stuck it

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<sup>220</sup> John Leo wrote the following article in the U.S. News & World Report, March 5, 2001, *Lovely Monsters: Another nude Jesus*. The Brooklyn Museum of Art is at it again. This time it's a naked female Jesus at the Last Supper. The demeaning of Christian symbols is a mainstream activity in our art world. Nude female images of Jesus are old hat in this game. So are sendups of the Last Supper. Many versions are available, including one with Jesus and the Apostles as dogs and another featuring Jesus as Mrs. Butterworth, the syrup lady. The makers of the movie *Hannibal* ... (FBI agent) ... Hannibal is similar to the view many journalists had of the Unabomber: Sure, blowing people up (or eating them) isn't a defensible activity, but still he's a pretty riveting fellow who lives by his principles. One of Hannibal's major principles is that he prefers to eat only rude people. Yes, he has some off-putting moments in the film. He cuts open the head of a living federal agent and feeds him his own brains. But in the end, he's a noble, self-sacrificing fellow who is so fond of Clarice that he doesn't even eat her.

*The Marquis de Sade, romantic hero. Quills*, Philip Kaufman's film about de Sade, drew an Oscar nomination for best actor (Geoffrey Rush). It is also a contender for most perverse movie (no statuette given). In real life, de Sade was a monster who liked to beat and rape women. He was a dedicated pedophile who strongly recommended incest (it "should be the law of every government whose basis is fraternity"). De Sade abused, raped and tortured seven or eight young servant girls and kept them captive so they couldn't testify about his crimes. So naturally in the Hollywood version he is an attractive and essentially harmless fellow of principle whose main problem was censorship by a corrupt Establishment. Jonathan Last, in a review in the *Weekly Standard*, notes that the good and decent men who oversaw de Sade at the asylum of Charenton, a priest and a doctor, are presented as the real perverts. Last says that an old Hollywood standby has been imposed in the material: "The proponents of free sex are the enlightened forces of truth and happiness, while the opponents are the repressed forces of darkness and misery." In an interview, Kaufman pointed out that the doctor's character bears a resemblance to Kenneth Starr. No surprise there. Somehow we always knew that if Hollywood did the life of de Sade, he would be the hero and the villain would turn out to be Ken Starr. This raises a big question. If a sympathetic case can be made for Hannibal and de Sade, is there anyplace where the Hollywood culture will draw a moral line?

<sup>221</sup> Nigel Reynolds, Arts Correspondent: 'Shocking' urinal better than Picasso because they say so

in an exhibition in New York in 1917 and declared that it was art because he said so...the respondents were not a sample of the public but the 500 most powerful people in the British art world – artists, dealers, critics, and the curators and chatterers in museums and galleries....“Ten years ago Picasso or Matisse would have won. They were the twin kings of modern art...”

Among artists now, art is expected not to be comfortable. It's expected to be at the edge and have political and moral messages. Duchamp... His revolutionary idea was to turn objects of everyday life into works of art with little or no modification. These works became known as “readymades”. Art could take any form and be made of anything, an idea that has been taken up with gusto by the likes of Hirst, with his pickled animals; Emin, with her unmade bed; and the new generation of video artists dominating the Turner Prize this year. Duchamp's first “readymade” piece, in 1915, was a snow shovel. Soon afterwards he caused a furor in New York when he showed up at an exhibition held by the Society of Independent Artists, urinal under arm, intending to display it. The show was an open exhibition and Duchamp, after paying his \$6 entrance fee, could not be stopped. But some tried, including the president of the society who complained to the collector Walter Arensberg: “You mean to say, if a man sent in horse manure glued to a canvas that we should have to accept it?” Arensberg replied: “I am afraid we should.” And the remark was to prove a great harbinger. Mr. Wilson insisted that *Fountain* – named because it was not only watery but a satire on the fountains painted by the Old Masters – was a worthy winner.

What is amazing is that art critiques have gone along with all this. Since there is obviously no content to such “art”, the critics compensate by becoming more and more obscure. There was a clear drift from clarity to impenetrability, from sharp, cleanly delivered opinions to muddy neutrality.<sup>222</sup>

In 2002, the Jewish Museum in New York City hosted an exhibition titled “*Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art.*” There's a Lego Concentration Camp Set presented like a commercially packaged toy; poison gas canisters done as Tiffany and Hermes gift boxes; busts of Josef Mengele in Gilded Age majesty; and Internet-ready totally nude girls inserted into pictures of Nazi camp guards. This comes after a long series of artistic travesties, including Robert Mapplethorpe's bullwhip, Andres Serrano's urine, Terrence McNally's gay messiah and, more recently, Chris Ofili's dung.

Consider these snippets on gallery shows from a recent batch of art glossies:

“Younger artists like David Row and Shirley Kaneda have also begun to investigate the possibilities of painting in a post-Kantian context, without giving up their works' traditional epistemological character in favor of a verbal model of production.” (International Flash Art, Summer 1994)

Perhaps we've seen too many sculptures dealing with the human body in the last few years, or perhaps the impressive artisanry (by expert tailors) overwhelmed the metaphoric possibilities of the work, or perhaps the metaphor itself (weight as content) was simply too obvious.” (Art In America, September 1994)

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<sup>222</sup> The New York Times, October 23, 1994. Unlike newspapers and general interest magazine, periodicals specializing in art are free of the demand to be accessible to a mass audience and are typically published after shows close. So, theoretically, they could venture deeper into more incisive criticism. Instead, the reviews these professionals could be expected to depend upon have become little more than signals that a specific artist had been recognized, they said.

“Don't read the review, just measure it,” said Manuel Gonzales, executive director of Chase Manhattan's 13,200-piece art collection, quoting the art dealer Sidney Janis. Speaking privately, several curators and academics said they had long since stopped following the reviews.

Jack Benkowsky, editor of Artforum, says he worries that criticism that can't be understood without painstaking rereading and criticism that forsakes judgment for description may be destined for irrelevance. He traces the trend toward obfuscation on popular magazines to the highly analytical criticism found in academic journals, which, he says, are poorly mimicked by "second-string writers" in a kind of intellectual trickle-down effect.

This kind of abstract vocabulary and obscure frames of reference have become a *lingua franca* among gallery owners, academics and critics alike. The insular nature of the conversation leaves everyone else clueless, which is just as well, given the garbage art that these critics are trying to talk about. What on earth can you say about something like Sherrie Levine's display, "Newborn," at the Marian Goodman Gallery which is comprised of arranging six grand pianos and nothing more.

Meanwhile, *CNN* (December 11-12, 1999, B.J. Sigismund) reported that a new art exhibition at Liverpool's Tate Gallery, came to show that pop icons have replaced religion in the modern age, which has at its center a statue of Princess Diana as the Virgin Mary. Today's performers, royalty and fashion models "are adored as once were saints or angels," a spokesperson for the museum told the London Independent. While the exhibit juxtaposes images of Michael Jackson (and his pet, Bubbles), female bodybuilders and Jesus Christ, it's Luigi Baggi's 15-foot-tall sculpture of the late Princess of Wales that has incited anger in some of the English. Anthony Kilmister, chairman of the Prayer Book Society, told Reuters: "The idea of Diana as the Virgin Mary is in appallingly bad taste." The show was titled "Heaven and Earth: An Exhibition That Will Break Your Heart."

Jed Perl, in his book, *Reports From an Art World in Crisis* (Basic Books, 2000), reports the following:

[In previous times, it was thought that] a work of art must have a free-standing value. ... We judged by what we saw. [Today,] a painting or sculpture [may not be] especially engaging but [it may still] gain interest because there's a lot of buzz around it, because it's expensive, or because it's being promoted by the right collector, dealer, curator, or critic. There have always been market forces and fashion shifts, but never before have so many intelligent people been so willing to believe that ... fashion is art, career is art, money is art. ... The assumption is that art is born, lives, and dies in the public sphere. Such an art can have no freestanding value, [no substance or essence]; the very idea of value is regarded as a social construct. ... Art, in short, does not so much shape the world as it is shaped by the world. The art market seems to have more intellectual cachet than art itself. ...

The glamour factor in the art world is nothing new. ... In 1949 *Life* magazine gave its readers a good laugh by suggesting that Jackson Pollock, a moody Greenwich Village legend who liked to drip paint, just might be the greatest artist alive. Once the public had wondered at and howled over Pollock, the pattern was set and people were screaming for more. Pop Art was hog heaven, and everybody hopped on the art merry-go-round. If you couldn't afford a Jasper Johns Flag, at least you could afford the American flag canisters that were sold at hip shops like Azuma. By the 1980s it was taken for granted that Wall Street money fueled the carnival, and everybody was talking about the waiting list to buy paintings at the Mary Boone Gallery and about the size of the latest art star's loft in SoHo.

Even as the headlines have shifted from Julian Schnabel's plate smashings to Jesse Helms's NEA bashings – and now, in the late '90s, to the architects who design the museums where all the overscaled art of the past quarter century is going on permanent display – the most important story in the art world remains untold.

The support system of galleries, grants, collectors, curators, and publications that makes it possible for artists to have slow-developing, serious careers is in a state of near total collapse. Most of the people who believe in the freestanding value of art have been silenced – if not swept away. ...

In the years after World War II ... in the egalitarian atmosphere of New York, even casual gallerygoers could begin all too easily to imagine that they understood more about the avant-garde imagination than they really did. Context was beginning to overtake content. The sophisticated public's gossipy familiarity with the life and times of Jackson Pollock or Willem de Kooning set the stage for a new kind of ultra-hip philistinism. And artists who wanted to be better known were sometimes glad to confuse the public imagination with their own. "Let your monstrous subconscious make a quick buck for yourself," the painter Ad Reinhardt announced in one of his cartoon collages, published in the magazine *Transformation* in 1952. "Holler 'Hang the museums!'" he urged, "until they hang you, then clam up and collect." ...

In the nineteenth century the collapse of the old system of salons and academies set the stage for an increasingly improvisational interaction between artist and audience – the explosion of Pop Art in the early 1960s ... was less a catalyzing force than a neat conclusion. Pop Art's subject matter dramatized the shift from a private to a public avant-garde because so many of those Pop images and motifs were drawn from material that had no private meaning for the artists. Andy Warhol, who came out of the world of advertising, defined a new kind of art world career – the career that was conducted entirely in the public eye. At that point ... avant-garde art came to be tied to market values rather than to artistic values.

A whole culture has grown up in Warhol's wake, a culture that by now includes its own educational institutions, such as the California Institute of the Arts, where students are taught little, it seems to me, beyond how to have public art world careers. At such institutions, the freestanding value of art is an arcane idea – as odd, and maybe as oddly charming, as not wearing white shoes before Memorial Day. ...

[There are many] parallels between art hype and book hype ... But I think that there is reason to believe that the art world is even more vulnerable to media forces than the literary world. Works of art, which can be taken in with a single glance, create an illusion of instant capture, instant expertise ... and the art that gets the attention satisfies that need for quick satisfaction – it's all up front, there are no nuances or mysteries to unravel. ...

Museums have become the places where the contemporary art hype reaches the boiling point. The museums expect to draw audiences of a size that they never dreamed of before, and they understandably feel that this enlarged public needs to be given a carefully shaped and predigested view of contemporary art. In order to create this neatly tailored picture, curators willfully deny the variety of the contemporary scene. ... Even as the number of artists at work has expanded geometrically, the number of artists included in major surveys has plummeted. ... Curators [have now achieved a] godlike position. ... Those older surveys weren't summaries of trends, they were designed for an audience with some sophistication, an audience that could deal with the variety of contemporary developments. Today's surveys aren't really surveys at all, they're more like quickie summaries. ... The new surveys are a big lie, snow jobs that distance the audience from what's really going on.

The changes in survey shows are only one sign of the increasingly restricted opportunities open to those artists who are determined to follow their own lights and create work that does not fit easily with the art world's formulaic expectations. Another problem is the art magazines, which have in the past twenty years largely abandoned their old job of reporting

what goes on in the galleries and instead have become publicity machines for art stars and art star wannabes. In the 50's and 60's any artist who managed to have a show in New York City was virtually guaranteed at least a brief review. Most reviews at that time were really substantial; they really delved into the work. They were written by amazingly astute critics, such as the artists Donald Judd, Sidney Tillim, and Fairfield Porter, and the poet James Schuyler. The importance of short reviews for the art community cannot be overestimated. They amount to a kind of written conversation about art, a reflection of the dialogue that's going on among the artists. Yet now, even with hundreds more galleries, fewer shows are reviewed than ever before. ...

In the past decade, an extraordinary amount of attention, both in the art press and the mainstream media, has focused on the crazy prices paid for contemporary art at auctions and on the waiting lists at the blue-chip galleries. In the spring of 1999, works by contemporary artists, among them Robert Gober, went on auction for a number of prices in the hundreds of thousands of dollars ... (Van Gogh's Portrait of Dr. Gachet went for \$82.5 million!) Thirty years ago, collecting contemporary art was something that many educated people did, at least in a small way. If you couldn't afford the paintings, you might buy original graphics by Picasso and Matisse – not to mention works on paper by contemporary Americans. In fact, it is still possible to collect works of quality for a few thousand dollars. But the news of the immense prices that are being paid for works by Schnabel and Basquiat – and, now, Sherman and Gober – makes people believe that all art that's worth having is expensive. And that ties right into the deeper feeling that art no longer has a stand-alone impact, an impact that people can respond to irrespective of prices, labels, reputations. ...

Art panels at the NEA and other institutions [operate according to] the basic assumption that certain styles in which the public art world isn't interested can simply be excluded from consideration. ... Grants, even small ones, have sustained many unconventional artists. But in recent years, most grant-giving processes have become hopelessly tied to the market values of the public art world. ...

Art teaching is dominated by the wannabes; and all they do is teach students to mimic art-star values, which is all they, the teachers, know how to do. What's going on in the art schools may be the most disastrous development of all. ... In the 80's ... there seemed to be fewer and fewer people who believed that what commanded high prices might not be more or less synonymous with what was good. University administrators became all too conscious of the public art world, and they began to expect their departments to reflect public art world values. ... The academics ... didn't want to be excluded from the party.

[Political correctness also became a factor. It was in the 80's that] Robert Mapplethorpe was transformed from a clever aesthete into a martyr at the altar of political art. In the 70's and early 80's an artist painting small landscapes or abstractions would have been told by dealers that what the money people wanted wasn't "just another" landscape or abstraction, no matter how good. By the late 80's that same artist – if that artist happened to be a woman – would be told by many critics that she had no right to paint in a traditional genre because those genres were male-dominated. ...

One of the most depressing developments of the 90's has been the insistence with which reputations that not even the trendies care about are pointlessly sustained. Who any longer gives a damn about Haim Steinbach's shelves lined with buyables? Yet the work is still reviewed in the *New York Times*. To do otherwise would be to reveal that the emperors of the 80's never had any clothes.

In the 80's a lot of people would have said that we were living in the Age of the Art Stars. As for the 90's, I think we'd probably have to call this the Age of the Deal Makers. ... The deal makers include some commercial dealers, along with some curators, some museum directors, and some collectors – who not infrequently double as museum trustees. But the individuals – and this is the key to understanding the Age of the Deal Makers – are less significant than the synergy between the players. The deal maker isn't in the business of making judgments about art. These people may represent the ultimate triumph of the public art world in that they couldn't care less what artists think or feel or do in the privacy of their studios.

*Newsweek*, February 5th, 2001: While repairing the stone floor at Houston's Museum of Fine Arts outdoor sculpture garden, workers put a velvet rope in front of a bronze bas-relief piece to protect it and secured the burlap with duct tape. Wind pulled loose a corner of the burlap, exposing about 30 percent of the piece. An executive of the construction company described what his crew heard some museum visitors say:

“For about half an hour they discussed the deep symbolism and implication of the artist having covered his work in burlap and why he allowed the public only partial access to what was there. They waxed long and hard about the appropriateness of the texture of the burlap in relation to the medium used. And what the use of the velvet rope meant in juxtaposition to the base materials of the burlap and duct tape. And the cosmic significance of using degradable materials to hide the true inner beauty.”

### **Top Prices Achieved at Auction Since 1985**

1. Van Gogh, *Portrait of Dr. Gachet*, **\$82,500,000**, Christie's New York, May 15, 1990
2. Renoir, *Au Moulin de la Galette*, **\$78,100,000**, Sotheby's NY, May 17, 1990
3. Van Gogh, *Portrait de l'artiste sans barbe*, **\$71,502,500**, Christie's NY, November 19, 1998
4. Cezanne, *Rideau, Cruchon et compotier (Still Life With Curtain, Pitcher and Bowl of Fruit)*, **\$60,502,500**, Sotheby's NY, May 10, 1999
5. Picasso, *Femme aux bras croises*, **\$55,006,000** Christie's NY, November 8, 2000

### **b- Theater**

John Leo (in *U.S. News and World Report*, 6/15/98) reported the following:

Coming soon to Broadway or off-Broadway: a play about a homosexual Jesus character named Joshua who has sex with his disciples and is crucified as “king of the queers.” The play, not yet finished, is *Corpus Christi* by Terrence McNally, who has won three Tony's for his work.

In scheduling the play, the Manhattan Theatre Club called it a “spiritual journey,” McNally's “own unique view of ‘the greatest story ever told.’” “No script has been made public. But McNally has privately circulated several versions of the text, and a copy acquired by the *New York Times* seems to cast doubt on the “spiritual journey” account of what McNally is up to.

Telling readers that the play unfolds “in a manner with potential to offend many people,” the *Times* gave this account: “Joshua has a long-running affair with Judas and sexual relations with the other Apostles. Only one sexual encounter, a non-explicit one with an HIV-positive street hustler, takes place in any form on stage.” The draft ends with the frank admission: “If we have offended, so be it. He belongs to us as well as you.”

“He belongs to us,” of course, doesn’t seem to make much sense, artistically or scripturally. It seems more like politicized, in-your-face Christian baiting.

In response, the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights vowed to “wage a war that no one will forget” if the show goes on. The theater canceled the play after a phone threat to burn the place to the ground. Famous dramatists and other writers complained that the theater club was being intimidated into self-censorship. Administrators of the club then reversed themselves and rescheduled the play.

The New York arts community is treating this solely as an issue of artistic freedom and the need to keep “bigots” (as *New York* magazine called the protesters) from determining which plays other people should see. But surely there are other issues to raise. For instance, what are the limits of offensive art in a civil society? The traditional Passion Plays have more or less disappeared because most people concluded they were anti-Semitic. *The Merchant of Venice* is rarely performed these days, and when it is, the Shylock role is almost always altered to make him more sympathetic. No one would put a show on Broadway about scalp-collecting Indians or shuffling, happy black slaves. Why isn’t the trashing of people’s core religious beliefs in this category?

One reason is that arguments about artistic freedom are not applied consistently. Some people who back McNally may well have supported the attempts by gays to block movies such as *Cruising*, or the banning of *The Birth of a Nation* from the Library of Congress’s festival of America’s best films. This is because the “sensitivity” movement, like the anticensorship movement, is mostly monitored by people deeply concerned about race and gender but indifferent or hostile to religion and mainstream values.

Michelle Malkin of the *Seattle Times* wrote a recent column about a Seattle art show that drew no media criticism, even though the paintings featured Jesus on an obscene version of the cross, a pope apparently engaging in a lewd act, and pages of a Bible defaced with Satanic marks. What would have happened, she asked, if the art had featured a lascivious rabbi or a black slave woman in a degrading sex act? “There is no question the city’s civility police would be out in full force,” she wrote.

The paintings are very close to the vicious images of the 19th-century Nativists, who were among our most famous bigots. Assaults on the sensibilities of Christians in general and Catholics in particular are now going mainstream, with nary a peep out of those who concern themselves so deeply with “hate speech.” The last episode of ABC-TV’s failed sitcom *That’s Life* was essentially a bitter anti-Catholic tirade, making fun of the Eucharist and Jesus’s death on the cross and comparing confessionals to toilets.

Cardinal John O’Connor has been called “Cardinal O’Killer” (an AIDS poster) and “a fat cannibal” whose cathedral is “a house of walking swastikas” (an art show catalog); priests are “sociopathic” and the celibacy vow is “an empty sham” (*Spin* magazine); the pope is “His Silliness” (ACT UP) and “a dirty old man walking around in a dress” (K-Rock radio in New York); Communion hosts are “crackers” (*The Nation*) that might be replaced with “Triscuits” (a Michigan talk-show host) – or perhaps sausage, for “a spicy body of Christ” (a Chicago talk-show host). In the art world, blasphemous art intended to debase Christianity, much of it coming from gay artists, routinely features sex acts involving Jesus, or the pope, or priests. Colorful things are done to the Virgin Mary, too. Gay parades often feature swishy-looking Jesus figures and hairy guys dressed as nuns. It’s a continuing theater of propaganda, much of it under the guise of art.

Question: In the current age of hypersensitivity, what other group in America has to put up with vilification like this? No religion should expect immunity from criticism. But these

aren't arguments about sexual policy or dogma. They are attempts to degrade and enrage. The technical term for this is bigotry. Sensitivity mongers, please note.

### c- Music

Allan Bloom in *The Closing of the American Mind* calls this the age of music, at least for adolescents. Walkmans have made it possible that wherever one is, one can plug in. But the problem is that the music has nothing to do with the rest of the world. "Never was there an art form directed so exclusively to children."<sup>223</sup>

"The words implicitly and explicitly describe bodily acts that satisfy sexual desire and treat them as its only natural and routine culmination for children who do not yet have the slightest imagination of love, marriage or the family. ... Picture a thirteen-year-old boy sitting in the living room of his family home doing his math assignment while wearing his Walkman headphones or watching MTV. He enjoys the liberties hard won over centuries by the alliance of philosophic genius and political heroism, consecrated by the blood of martyrs; he is provided with comfort and leisure by the most productive economy ever known to mankind; science has penetrated the secrets of nature in order to provide him the with marvelous, life-like electronic sound and image production he is enjoying. And in what does progress culminate? A pubescent child who throbs with orgasmic rhythms. ..."<sup>224</sup>

"The result is nothing less than parents' control over their children's moral education at a time when no one else is seriously concerned with it. ..."

"Students who have had serious flings with drugs – and gotten over it – find it difficult to have enthusiasms or great expectations. ... The pleasure they experienced at the beginning was so intense that they no longer look for it at the end. ... Rock addiction ... has an effect similar to that of drugs." (pgs. 68 – 71)

Based on *Newsweek*, Oct 9, 2000:

Hip-hop music, a marginal musical form 20 years ago has now come to dominate the pop charts. Eminem, who raps about murder and raping his mother, has just produced a jaw-droppingly harsh "Marshall Mathers LP," has sold gone septuple-platinum – neck and neck with Britney Spears – while the latest CD by his producer Dr. Dre, godfather of gangsta rap and cofounder of N.W.A, went quintuple-platinum. Six of last week's top 20 albums were rap records. All of them had parental-advisory stickers. Dr. Dre promises his client's next CD will be even harder-core. Though a new *Newsweek* Poll finds that 41 percent of voters nationwide say they listen at least occasionally to rap – and three quarters of voters under 30 do – almost two thirds say it has too much violence. Sixty-three percent of listeners think it

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<sup>223</sup> Later Bloom states: The music business ... caters almost exclusively to children, treating legally and naturally imperfect human beings as though they were ready to enjoy the final and complete satisfaction. (pgs. 76-77)

<sup>224</sup> For an insight into the connection between sensuality and song concerts, consider the following description of a former movie star, Judy Garland: Her concerts during the 1950's and 1960's were so popular among homosexuals that, in each city in which she appeared, local gay bars emptied as their patrons came out en masse to hear a dazed and disoriented performer, slumped over the microphone, croak out the broken lyrics of songs that, in her final days, she had difficulty remembering. Witnesses describe her concerts as orgiastic rites during which screaming multitudes of homosexuals, whipped up into a frenzy by her songs wept out loud, laying on the stage at their divinity's feet mountains of flowers. One fan recalled a performance he attended as "more a love-in than a concert": They liked, not her, so much as her audience, the hordes of other gay men who gathered in her name. The hysterical ovations her audiences gave her were in some sense applause for themselves. Garland was simply the hostess. (From the N.Y. Times book Review of: *The Death of Camp: Gay Men and Hollywood Diva Worship, from Reverence to Ridicule*)

has a bad attitude toward women, and substantial majorities believe it's too materialistic and contains too much sex.<sup>225</sup>

Based on an article written by John Leo in *U.S. News & World Report*, September 4, 2000, *Hollywood Connection*:

The current focus of the “anything goes” ethic is the gross white rapper Eminem, who has sold 5 million copies of a new album celebrating rape, drugs, murder, and hatred of women and homosexuals. Sick and twisted rap music is an old story. What's new about the Eminem album, said *Entertainment Weekly*, is “the sudden ease and enthusiasm with which a mainstream of teens and preteens is absorbing its corrosive vision.” The young buyers often try to explain: Nobody pays attention to the words; over-the-top violations of political correctness are kind of exciting; it's not cool to attack a hot singer on moral grounds; besides, he's talented, and that's all that matters.

*People Magazine, Meet the Real Slim Shady*

In a year in which nothing was taboo, Eminem (a.k.a. Slim Shady; real name Marshall Mathers) ruled. His run-ins with the Fifth Commandment (his mother is suing him for defamation) and, nearly, the Sixth (he faces charges for assault with a deadly weapon) helped cement his status as one of rap music's most outrageous performers. Eminem's impact on pop music has been so profound – he has sold more than 11 million albums – and his detractors so vitriolic, that the potty mouth from Detroit has challenged our idea of what's acceptable.

On a different note, Rabbi N. T. Lopes Cardozo writes<sup>226</sup>:

When joining synagogues around the world for prayer, one is often confronted with a lack of religious enthusiasm. In many synagogues, services are heavy and often a little depressing. It is not always the lack of concentration by the worshippers which makes synagogue services unattractive but the absence of song and smile. It is true that prayer is a most serious undertaking, yet our sages have often emphasized the fact that the opportunity to speak to the Lord of Universe is a great privilege which should bring great happiness to man. Most interesting is the fact that one of the ways we are able to identify the Mashiach is his capacity and willingness to sing. In the tractate Sanhedrin (94a), Bar Kapara states that God intended to appoint King Chizkiyahu as the Mashiach, i.e. the ultimate redeemer of mankind, but ultimately did not.

Chizkiyahu is known as one of the most righteous men the Jewish people have ever seen. He introduced most important religious reforms and was a man of outstanding devotion, committed to the highest level of morality. In fact, he was so successful in his attempt to improve Jewish education that there was "no boy or girl, no man or even woman in the land

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<sup>226</sup> Thoughts to Ponder Number 56: Rosh Chodesh Av, 5760; August 2, 2000 "*There is no Mashiach Without a Song*"

who was not versed in the religious laws of tahara and tuma, purity or impurity!" (ibid.) Still, King Chizkiyahu was not even able to educate his own son King Menashe in "the fear of God." The latter is known for his wickedness, and commentators observe that this was due to the fact that his righteous father did not know how to sing and was therefore not able to inspire him. We can be sure that Menashe was well educated in Jewish learning but all such learning stayed academic and frigid, because the warmth of a song did not accompany it.

Most telling is the fact that the sages inform us that King Chizkiyahu did not even sing after he experienced a great miracle which saved Israel from the hands of the wicked Sancherib, the Assyrian king. (ibid.)

Not being able to sing is considered by our sages as a serious and irreparable weakness which invalidates one from being the Mashiach. Indeed we find that all of King Chizkiyahu's efforts to encourage Jewish learning came to an end after he passed away. There is no future to Jewish learning and Judaism without a song and a smile.

Music is raising the spoken word to a level which touches on prophecy. It gives it a taste of that which is beyond and transforms it into something untouchable. Just as there is no way to demonstrate the beauty of music to a man who is deaf, so there is no way to explain the difference between a spoken word and one which is sung unless one sings. It lifts man out of the mundane and gives him a feeling of the imponderable, which is the entrance to joy.

To sing is to know how to stand still and dwell upon a word. While this is even true for a song of the individual, it becomes more apparent when a group of human beings joins in communal song.

When our sages inform us that no one is able to become the Mashiach unless he is able and willing to sing, it should be a message to all who want to be religious that song should be a most important part of their prayers and lives.

#### *xiv- Sports*

Professional sports are a huge business and form of entertainment in the U.S.A. Great sportsmen are truly American heroes and idols and annually receive salaries of millions of dollars.<sup>227</sup> The loyalties of local fans to their teams seems to exceed all other affiliations. No less than two and a half million New Yorkers turned out to the ticker tape for the Yankees when they won the World Series in 1999. Sports stars are so admired that even kicking a ball is considered a better qualification for solving a physics problem than ... well solving a physics problem. Marianne Szegedy-Maszak wrote the following article in the *U.S. News & World Report*, January 29, 2001:

... reported that at a “representative coed liberal arts Division III college” in 1999, a minority applicant had an 18 percent better chance of getting admitted than the general pool, a legacy student had a 25 percent edge – and a recruited male athlete had a 48 percent better chance. For female athletes the advantage was even sweeter: 53 percent.

Yet sports stars are characterized by increasing violence and lack of values both on and off the field. In football the amount of concussions is staggering. Eric Lindros has suffered five concussions in his career, Steve Young 4 and Troy Aikman no less than 6. There are about 160 concussions in the NFL (National Football League) and 70 in the N.H.L. (National Hockey League) each year. In fact, more than 30,000 people sustain concussions in sporting events in the United States each year. Of 1,090 former NFL players, more than 60 percent suffered at least one concussion in their careers and 26 percent had had three or more. Those who had had concussions reported more problems with memory, concentration, speech impediments, headaches and other neurological problems than those who had not, the survey found.

Even after concussions, athletes face enormous pressure to continue playing, not only from peers, who sometimes ridicule them for being weak, but also from coaches and owners, who at times place the team’s immediate needs above the athletes’ long term health, many players said.

But violence in sport does not stop with concussions. Two National Football League players have recently been accused of murder. 21.4 percent of a sample of 509 NFL players during the 1996-97 season were arrested for more than petty crimes.

Another game with ongoing violence is ice hockey. In February, 2000 Marty McSorley and Canuck Donald Brachear had a fight in the middle of a hockey game which Brachear won. McSorley responded with a sneak attack in which he hit Brachear on the head with his hockey stick. Brachear’s helmet flew off as he crashed to the ice, causing a severe concussion. The NHL seems to do little or nothing to address the overall problem of violence in the sport. Referees routinely allow players to fight each other until they are spent. “Whatever the league says, fighting is allowed because it sells tickets,” says hockey historian Stan Fischler.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Salaries of great baseball players in 2004: Kevin Brown: \$15.7 million; Albert Bele: \$10 million; Alex Rodriguez: \$22 million; Cecil Fielder: \$9.2 million

<sup>228</sup> James C. McKinley Jr. wrote the following article in *The New York Times*, May 21, 2000, *Knight Case Shows Fine Line Colleges Walk* (excerpts quoted):

After the president of Florida State University, Talbot D’Alemberte, dared to suggest last fall that a star wide receiver serve a jail sentence before returning to play football, some of the irate letters he received were telling. “How dare you treat Athletic Director Hart and Coach Bowden as mere subordinates,” wrote an alumnus, Ron Lawrence. “I will never give another penny to the university as long as you are president of the institution.”

Baseball seems to have a far better record overall. Roberto Alomar, one of the all-time great middle infielders is long remembered for when in 1996 he spat in the face of the umpire, an incident he regretted and apologized for.<sup>229</sup> John Roker, the Atlanta Braves pitcher, has been roundly condemned for his well-publicized invectives against gays, ethnic minorities and foreigners. But that, in general is as bad as it gets.

O.J. Simpson, then Dennis Rodman and Charles Barkley, John Roker, Ray Lewis and Bobby Knight are all great sportsmen who have acted scurrilously. At least it is to the credit of the news media that unlike the first half of the 20th century when star athletes were set up on a pedestal, a lot of people whose main claims to fame are good reflexes and musculature are now being reproached for failing to come across as good role models for young Americans.

Not so with women athletes, at least those with good looks. Anna Kournikova at 18 years old became the highest-earning player in women's tennis – and outearns most men. Only problem is, she isn't making it playing. She has never, in fact, won a major tournament. She's making it on her looks. With the ascendance of Anna, eroticism trumps athleticism.

When Arnon Milchan, the flamboyant Hollywood producer of "*Pretty Woman*" and "*L.A. Confidential*," pledged \$120 million in a nine-year deal for TV rights to the Women's Tennis Association tour two years ago, he hired designers to make sexy clothes for teen hotties like Anna, Martina Hingis and Venus Williams. This, even though some young players already wore outfits so revealing that the tennis analyst Mary Carillo likened it to "kiddie porn" and Martina Navratilova cracked, "Why not just send them out there naked?"

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Indiana University ... the legendary basketball coach, Bob Knight, escaped dismissal even though the president, Myles Brand, and the university trustees concluded that he had a long history of abusive behavior, including choking a player and bullying a secretary.

A persistent three-decade record of inappropriate words and actions ...

In many schools, athletics have become a potent entertainment business, with coaches and athletes who become media stars and help market schools, attracting donations and students.

"College sports becomes the bridge between the elite culture of the university and the mass culture outside the university upon which the university depends."

In recent years, officials at the University of Minnesota and the University of Tennessee have struggled with allegations of academic fraud by athletes, while the University of Nebraska dealt with accusations that star football players physically abused women. The University of Vermont canceled part of the hockey season earlier this year because of hazing, and Providence College expelled three basketball players last week over an assault. Mr. Brand said he believed that the university had been culpable as well. For 29 years, he said, officials had either ignored Mr. Knight's abusive behavior or let him off with light sanctions, setting "implicit rules" that Mr. Knight could behave as he wanted.

At Florida State University, the pressure on Mr. D'Alamberte to keep the football team's star receiver, Peter Warrick, on the field was more overt. One donor threatened to withdraw a \$1 million contribution, university officials said.

Mr. Warrick had been charged with another football player and a department store cashier in a \$600 shoplifting scheme. Mr. Warrick's lawyer, John Kenny, along with the football coach, Bobby Bowden, and athletic director, Dave Hart Jr., had worked out a plea agreement with the Tallahassee prosecutor, Willie Meggs. Mr. Warrick would plead guilty to a misdemeanor, and he would serve 30 days in jail after the football season.

But Mr. D'Alamberte said it was university policy ... that Mr. Warrick must pay his debt to society before returning to football.

In the end Mr. Warrick's lawyer brokered a new deal. Instead of jail time, Mr. Warrick was allowed to do community service – picking up trash for 30 days – after admitting his guilt. Mr. D'Alamberte permitted Mr. Warrick to rejoin the football team before doing the community service, reasoning that the punishment was much less severe than jail time.

The University of Vermont canceled the remainder of the hockey season last January after Gov. Howard Dean intervened in the wake of a hazing scandal.

<sup>229</sup> The season after the spitting incident, Alomar sought Hirschbeck out during a game, shook his hand and apologized. In the years since, Alomar has become a leading benefactor of the charity Hirschbeck established to research adrenoleukodystrophy, the brain disease inherited by his two sons. The player and ump now consider one another friends. During a game May 20, reporters spotted Alomar hugging 13-year-old Indians batboy Michael Hirschbeck, John's son, in the Indians dugout.

Mary Lord wrote the following article in *U.S. News & World Report*, July 17, 2000, *Too Much, Too Soon?* (culled and adapted):

Last week ... “How many kids need to get frustrated and burned out to produce every Tiger Woods?” asks University of Washington ...

Many soccer leagues now accept 4-year-olds, and the number of 5-to-11 year olds playing golf has more than doubled since 1986. The lure of sky-high professional salaries, college scholarships, or an Olympic slot “leads many parents to push their kids beyond reasonable limits,” contends Anderson. Sports injuries carry high costs: over \$49 billion in medical bills and lost workdays in 1997.

### **Women in aggressive sports**

Andrew Curry wrote the following article in the *U.S. News & World Report*, February 19, 2001, *Ready to rumble*:

...A growing trend: women playing “violent” sports once thought of as exclusively male – from football to ice hockey.

Women’s ice hockey, which made its Olympic debut in 1998, had 6,336 women competing on high school, collegiate, and local teams in 1990. Today there are over 37,000. A decade ago, there were 132 girls wrestling in high school. Last year, there were 2,474 – a jump that has led to a growing number of collegiate women’s wrestling teams and the possibility that women will wrestle in the 2004 Olympics. Boxing, too, has seen a huge increase; there are 1,900 women registered with U.S.A. Boxing, representing the sport’s fastest-growing segment. And women’s rugby, which has been around since the early 1970s, has 11,200 women playing in collegiate and amateur clubs around the country.

“My players fall into three categories – the first just love football, the second want to contribute to history and pave the way for more women getting into the sport, and the third category is there because they just want to hit something,” says Sharks owner – and quarterback – Andra Douglas.

Recent films like *The Matrix*, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Charlie’s Angels* show violently physical women who are nonetheless fully feminine, and one of last year’s most acclaimed indie hits was *Girlfight*, about an angry teenager who channels her energy into the boxing ring.

### **Major U.S. sport signings**

Alex Rodriguez – Texas Rangers, 10 years (2001-2010) \$252m

Manny Ramirez – Boston Red Sox, eight years (2001-2008) \$160m

Kevin Garnett – Minnesota Timberwolves, six years (1997-2002) \$126m

Ken Griffey Jr. – Cincinnati Reds, nine years (2000-2008) \$116.5m

Shaquille O’Neal – Los Angeles Lakers, seven years (1997-2003) \$120m

Alonzo Mourning – Miami Heat, seven years (1997-2003) \$112m

Troy Alkman – Dallas Cowboys, nine years (1999-2007) \$85.5m

Terrell Davis – Denver Broncos, nine years (1998-2006) \$56.1m

*xv- Alcohol, drugs, violence and other trends*

Between 1991 and 1999 murders dropped by 37 percent in steady increments ... In 1999 the murder total dropped just 1.7 percent. In 2001 crime was up by 2 percent. For the third straight year, the rate of serious crime in the United States showed little change in 2002, dropping 1.1 percent. Murders were up by 1 percent. But that number was down almost 34 percent from a decade earlier. This was despite a poor job market, especially for young people; the diversion of police resources to fighting terrorism; budget deficits that caused cutbacks in social services and prisons; and a growth in the number of young people in their prime age for committing crime. Overall, the rate of violent crime fell 2 percent last year, while property crime declined 0.9 percent. The number of women arrested last year increased 2.1 percent. Men still accounted for 77 percent of all those arrested.<sup>230</sup>

When lower crime statistics are quoted one has to keep things in perspective. In 2002, more than a decade after its homicide rate peaked at 2,245 in 1990, the city ended 2002 with fewer than 600 homicides for the first time since 1963. This seems fabulous now but the 548 killings in 1963 represented a significant increase over 508 the year before and that figure in turn was considered nightmarish at the time.

Some of the factors that contributed to the crime drop of the last few years, the experts say, were smart new policing tactics, tougher prison sentences, new gun control laws and more involvement by neighborhood groups.<sup>231</sup> The waning of the crack epidemic also played a role, experts say, as did the nation's prolonged economic expansion.

The *NY Times* reported on September 8, 2002 that the number of people who were victims of all violent crimes except homicide fell by 9 percent in 2001, sending the crime rate to its lowest level since it was first tracked in 1973. The drop was primarily due to a record low number of reported assaults, the most common form of violent crime.

Experts claimed that the decrease was a result primarily of the strong economy in the 1990's and the prevalence of tougher sentencing laws. The violent crime rate has decreased by almost 50 percent since 1993.

In 2002, serious and violent crime in the United States increased for the first time since 1991. Murder rose 2.5 percent nationwide over the figure for 2000. Robberies climbed 3.7 percent, burglaries 2.9 percent, petty thefts 1.5 percent and motor vehicle thefts 5.7 percent.

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<sup>230</sup> The F.B.I. count, the Uniform Crime Report, whose statistics are drawn from reports to state and local law enforcement agencies around the country, measures four violent offenses (murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault) and four property crimes (burglary, larceny, auto theft and arson). It does not measure drug crimes.

<sup>231</sup> Most Crimes of Violence and Property Hover at 30-Year Lows: Matthew L. Wald, published September 13, 2004: The rate of property crime and violent crime other than homicides remained at a 30-year low in 2003. Crime rates are now at the lowest level since the Justice Ministry started measuring them in 1973. Rates dipped in the mid-80's, climbed in the early 90's and then dipped again. There was a steady decline from 1993 until 2002 and then a leveling off. The number of victims of violent crimes for 2003 was 22.6 per 1,000 people, down from 49.9 in 1993. In 2002, there were 16,200 homicides, up 1 percent from 2001. The rate of property crimes was much higher but also declined. In 2003, it was 163.2 per 1,000 people, down almost 49 percent from 1993. Those crimes included household burglary and motor vehicle theft. Homicides are at the lowest rate since the 1960's. And the percentage of violent incidents involving a firearm also declined, to 7 percent last year from 11 percent in 1993.

Explanations for this phenomena include having a lot of very high-rate offenders behind bars. Better communication between police agencies, better police deployments, and other factors. Nobody suggested that American society had become more moral.

Rape also increased by 0.3 percent, while aggravated assault dropped 0.5 percent. Figures for these two crimes are considered the least reliable of the seven that go into the F.B.I.'s index because of problems with reporting and measuring them.

Over all, crime rose 2.1 percent across the nation. Experts and law enforcement officials said the overall increase, after a decade of drops in the crime rate, appeared to reflect several factors: a faltering economy, cuts in welfare and anticrime programs, as well as fewer jobs available, more inmates returning home from prison, an increase in the teenage population, and police resources diverted to antiterrorism efforts. The number of teenagers is now increasing 1 percent a year, after a decline in the 1990's. People in their late teens and early 20's are in the prime years for committing crime, statistics show.

In addition, the experts said, after 10 years of decreases, in which the crime rate dropped to its lowest level since the late 1960's, it would have been hard for it to keep falling.

New York still showed a crime decrease, with 649 murders in 2001 compared with 673 in 2000, a decrease of 3.6 percent. Philadelphia had a decrease of 3.1 percent, Washington 2.9 percent and Baltimore 1.9 percent.

Glen Owen reported in *The Times* (England), December 14, 2000, that in England, it is believed that up to a million children a year are bullied, with up to a third of girls and a quarter of boys afraid to go to school as a result. About ten cases each year end in suicide.

Sebastian Junger: Another case of hazings was reported in April, '03 from a prestigious girls' school in Chicago. One freshman suffered a concussion, and several others had to be hospitalized. ...Hazing incidents, which are more and more in the news, are thought to reflect a rising level of violent incidents in our society and, as such, they have been roundly denounced. Some critics take it further and say all hazing must stop. The recent acts are criminal and should be prosecuted. But the very pervasiveness of hazing should also alert people that something else is going on. Unlike most violence, hazings are, to some degree, elective, and they result in an increase in status on the part of the victim.

Drug usage in America has remained enormously problematic. The media tend to highlight any local improvement (from year to year or even from decade to decade) while ignoring the fact that such figures would have been shocking as little ago as the fifties (and very often the sixties, seventies and eighties as well) and would have been considered a portender to the collapse of American civilization in the first part of the century.

After years on the rise, teenagers' use of a variety of illicit drugs declined or leveled off from 1997 to 1999. Drug use started going up in 1991, leveling off in 1998 and showing a marginal decline in 1999. Marijuana showed a slight but steady decline. For the first time since 1993, the reported use of cocaine and crack declined from eight to seven percent. Three percent tried heroin.

Heroin use by high school seniors went from 2.2 percent of the seniors sampled in 1975 to below 1 percent in 1991, only to rebound to about 2 percent in 1997, where it has pretty much stayed. But the most recent survey, released last December, found that although 2 percent of high school seniors had reported using heroin, 2.3 percent of sophomores and eighth graders had admitted trying the drug. The average age at which heroin is first used has declined from 26.4 years in 1990 to 17.6 in 1997.

In the New York City region, suburban adolescents, a predominantly white group, are now more likely to be seduced by heroin than urban teenagers, many of whom are black and have rejected heroin after witnessing the devastation it has wreaked among their elders. About 3.5 percent of 198,000 Long Island students interviewed in the 7th through 12th grades

acknowledged trying heroin. Two percent said they had done so in the last 30 days, and 1 percent – nearly 2,000 students – admitted to being heavy heroin users. Heroin is easier than ever to find. Its falling price, now \$10 in a bag per dose, puts it within reach of a teenager's allowance. Its unprecedented purity allows users to avoid using needles and to snort it.

Cultural icons – especially musicians and actors – are less likely to be seen as purveyors of marijuana or drug 'coolness.' Nevertheless, the fact that "American heroes" can remain darlings of the society while still sending out such negative messages (although less) is still a shocking indictment of American society.

The number of teens who believe that "most people will try marijuana sometimes" has declined to 35 percent from 40 percent in 1998. The percentage of teens who said they agreed with the statement, "It seems like marijuana is everywhere these days," dropped to 48 percent this year, down from 52 percent in 1998 and 59 percent in 1997. (*CNN on the Web*, November 22nd, '99)

Attempts for drug rehabilitation<sup>232</sup>: Patrick is 30, ... [and] in ... Center Point, a substance-abuse treatment facility in San Rafael, Calif. ... This is his second time through here in a year. ... "What scares me are people like him, who are intelligent... That can be one of the biggest obstacles. You substitute intellectual understanding for actual change." I ask Patrick what odds he gives himself this round for staying off drugs. "Fifty-fifty at best," he says, evenly. "But anyone who'd give their chances as being any better than that is practicing self-deception."

Patrick is one of thousands of addicts in this country who are doing exactly what the new conventional wisdom says they should: going through treatment and probation rather than jail (or in exchange for a lighter sentence) with the promise of a better outcome.... The federal government spends about two-thirds of its \$19.2 billion drug budget on law enforcement and interdiction. A result has been a skyrocketing prison population -- it has tripled in the last two decades -- with at least 60 percent of inmates reporting a history of substance abuse. The cost of warehousing nonviolent drug offenders is more than twice as great as treating them. Meanwhile, a study by the RAND corporation's drug-policy center found that for every dollar spent on treatment, taxpayers save more than seven in other services, largely through reduced crime and medical fees and increased productivity. A visit to the emergency room, for instance, costs as much as a month in rehab, and more than 70,000 heroin addicts are admitted to E.R.'s annually.

Those facts, along with an enormously successful campaign by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to portray addiction as a disease rather than a moral weakness, have already persuaded Californians and Arizonans to pass voter initiatives requiring nonviolent drug offenders to be offered treatment with probation in lieu of jail. Similar measures are being targeted for November ballots in Michigan, Florida and Ohio. By 2003, systemic changes in the New York courts are expected to divert 10,000 nonviolent drug addicts to rehab annually.

In 1998, 16,000 Americans were killed and over a million injured in alcohol-related car crashes. A survey released March 27, 2000 found that 23 percent of students are "frequent binge drinkers" – up from 20 percent when the first nationwide survey was conducted in 1993. And the number of binge drinkers has remained steady, at 44 percent of undergraduates. (Binge drinkers are considered those who have consumed at least five drinks

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<sup>232</sup> NYT: February 2002 *Staying Clean*, Peggy Orenstein

in a row at one point during a two-week period; frequent binge drinkers downed that amount at least three times in two weeks.)

Binge drinkers are seven times as likely to miss classes and 10 times as likely to damage property as are light drinkers. Drug Strategies, a nonprofit group, estimates that underage drinking costs \$58 billion a year in traffic accidents, crimes, and treatment.

### **Child killers**

Columbine, a high school in Littleton, Colorado became, in April 1999, a code word for a kind of killing disease that has been sweeping America's schools. When students Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold massacred a teacher and 12 classmates (as well as themselves), they set a new standard for the bloody horror that may confront teenagers showing up for class each day. Columbine capped a long season of school killings in Pearl, Miss.; Paducah, Ky.; and Springfield, Ore., and left the nation in a state of confusion and grief. Despite a national outbreak of finger-pointing at everyone from gun manufacturers to Hollywood to uninvolved parents, the rampages continued. That same year, a 13-year-old boy opened fire and wounded five classmates in Fort Gibson, Okla., with a semiautomatic handgun.

On, March 23, 2000, in Lisbon, Ohio, a sixth-grader pulled a gun in his classroom, but a teacher persuaded him to drop the weapon. No one was hurt and the 12-year-old boy was taken into custody. He told authorities that his mother is in jail and he wanted to join her.

In October, 1999, on the six-month anniversary of the shooting spree, a 17-year-old Columbine senior was arrested for threatening to "finish the job." Then on February 1, the body of an 11-year-old boy who had been strangled was found in a trash can just blocks from the school. Some 95 explosive devices, enough to demolish the school, were discovered. Fortunately, most of the bombs failed.

Less than a year after the bloody massacre at their school, two Columbine sophomores were murdered near the school.<sup>233</sup>

Keith Naughton and Evan Thomas: Newsweek, March 13, 2000: Six-year-old Kayla Rolland was shot by a classmate... A 6-year-old boy settled a schoolyard score last week by taking a .32 semiautomatic and shooting his first-grade classmate, Kayla Rolland, age 6, in the chest. He was the product of an environment and family that the word dysfunctional does not begin to capture. The prior youngest-ever school killer was a 10-year-old.

### **Suicide**

Every 17 minutes someone in the United States commits suicide. Suicide ranks No. 3 among causes of death for young people generally, and it is No. 2 for college students. In 1995 (for example) more young people died of suicide than of AIDS, cancer, stroke, pneumonia, influenza, birth defects and heart disease combined.

Suicide accounted for 2% of deaths worldwide in 1998, which puts it well ahead of war and way ahead of homicide.

The likelihood of a young man committing suicide has increased 260% since the 1950's (*The NY Times*, Oct 24, 1999).

Based on *Time*, September 5, 1983:

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<sup>233</sup> Angie Cannon in U.S. News & World Report, The Columbine High Curse: Two More Die (February 14, 2000)

Despite the tremendous progress in human rights in the U.S.A., it still remains a very violent society. More Americans were killed with guns in the 18-year period between 1979 and 1997 (651,697) than were killed in battle in all wars since 1775 (650,858). In the United States today, one person dies by gunshot every eighteen minutes, twenty-four hours a day. In a year, that adds up to nearly 30,000 deaths. In two years, more Americans are killed by guns here at home than died in the entire Vietnam War. Of that annual total, about 15,000 commit suicide, 11,000 are murdered, and some 1,500 die in accidents involving guns.

One of the most disturbing things about the horrifying figures is the amount of violence committed by family members to each other. Of the 18,210 murders committed in the U.S. in 1997, a fifth of them were killings of loved ones.

There is no place so violent as home. Most rapes occur there. A woman's chances of being raped in the U.S. are three times as great as in Western Europe.

Often these people get violent, psychoanalysts say, because it gives them a cheap squirt of power. Like most criminals, they are immature and impulsive. Everything they want they want instantly. This is reinforced by a society whose whole message is instantaneous gratification.

Granny-bashing, the physical mistreatment of old people, usually the victimizers' parents or grandparents, is also a growing problem. About 5% of dependent elderly Americans may be abused.

Children are also at risk of being physically or sexually abused. The number of reported cases of child abuse in the U.S. is rising sharply. In 1976 the American Humane Association found that 413,000 cases of child abuse had been reported to state and local authorities that year. By 1981 the count had doubled to 851,000. In 1982 it climbed by 12%. By 1987 it surpassed 2 million. The figures may reflect a growing alertness to detect and report instances of child abuse. Only a small fraction of all abuses are reported, 10% to 25%. Homosexual abuse of boys by adult males in the home is more common than generally realized. Children are understandably reluctant to accuse their father or mother. When they do, the parent often denies any wrongdoing – and law-enforcement authorities find it difficult to take the word of a child over that of an adult.

Upwards of 90% of all prison inmates claim to have been abused as children. Child abuse perpetuates itself, as high as 90% – the abusive parent was abused as a child.

Some school districts invite child-abuse specialists into lower-grade classrooms to teach the difference between a “good touch” and a “bad touch.”

For every reported rape, an estimated 1,200 rapes or attempted rapes go unreported. Using conservative estimates, experts calculate that a woman's chance of being raped at some point during her life is an appalling 1 in 10. The number of reported rapes has steadily risen, jumping 35% to 99,146 in 1981. There has been an increase in incidents of gang rape, particularly on college campuses. The hardest rapes for women to report are “acquaintance rapes” or “date rapes,” an increasingly common practice on college campuses ... Half of all reported rapes ... Recent Justice Department statistics indicate that there are conservatively over 650,000 rapes per year in the United States. In 2002-2003, there were an average of **223,280 victims** of rape, attempted rape or sexual assault.

Rape is now regarded as a crime of violence, not passion. Sex is not the chief thing that motivates rapists. Most rapists have wives or girlfriends and are not sexually deprived. They

rape for power. Some men rape as a way of expressing anger, and often these rapes include beatings.

Three quarters of all rapists were sexually abused as children.

Studies show that it takes from six months to six years for rape victims to feel normal again, if they ever do. Studies show that divorce and suicide attempts are fairly common after rape.

In the first half of 2000, while overall crime fell in the U.S.A., rape and assault rose 0.7%. Serious crimes still went down 0.3 percent, extending the crime decline to eight and a half years. The decline, however, was minuscule compared to the 7 percent drop in 1999 and the 9.5 percent fall for the same six-month period last year. Professor James Alan Fox of Northeastern University in Boston, claimed. “This is the criminal justice limbo stick, we just can’t go any lower. We’ve had eight straight, wonderful years of declining crime rates, and at a certain point you just can’t push those numbers further down and we’ve hit that point.” Many cities are already seeing increases in their crime rate and, in the South, there was an overall rise in crime, up 1.2 percent. In the Northeast there was an increase in murders of 5.5 percent. Crime also rose in the suburbs and was up 3 percent in rural communities (based on the *NY Times*, 18th December, 2000).

Angie Cannon and Carolyn Kleiner wrote the following article in *U.S. News & World Report*, April 17, 2000, *Teens Get Real*:

ManaTEEN Club ... Manatee County on Florida’s west coast and 10,000 other teens donate more than a million hours of service a year.

- **Teen arrests are down.** Arrests for violent crimes dropped 19 percent from 1994 to 1998, more than three times the dip for adults. Since 1994, there have been sharp drops in murder, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and car theft committed by teenagers. The steady uptick of teen suicide since the 1950’s has been declining since 1994.
- **Drug use is down.** It’s a dramatic drop from the peaks of the 1970’s, the tail end of a counterculture famous for its own excesses. Drinking among teens has also decreased, and teen deaths from drunk-driving accidents, once considered epidemic, have dropped 59 percent since 1982. After a spike in the early 1990’s, teen smoking is finally going down, too.
- **Teen pregnancy is way down.** It’s still more prevalent than in other industrialized countries, but fewer older teens are having sex. What’s more, more of those who choose to have sex use birth control, resulting in fewer abortions.
- **School dropout rates are lower.** This is especially true for African-American kids, but there are other encouraging statistics. High school students are taking more challenging courses. Girls are closing the gender gap by taking more rigorous math and science classes. SAT scores are up from two decades ago (even adjusting for the recalibration of the test), as the pool of test takers has grown larger and more diverse. More and more kids are going to college.

Around the time of the Great Depression ... Before then, teens worked and were considered virtually grown up. But facing a workplace without jobs, Depression youth turned to education as a consolation prize. As high school attendance rolls swelled, the status of teens as full-fledged members of society declined. “Now that they were students rather than workers, they came to seem younger than before,” Hine writes.

About a quarter of all high school students today regularly perform community service, while an additional 40 percent do so occasionally. Those rates had been fairly stable since the mid-1970's; but during the 1990's, they began rising. James Youniss, a psychology professor at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., believes part of the explanation is generational. "In the 60's and 70's, it was activists against tradition. In the 80's, you had an apathetic generation, and in the 90's, kids were coming back to the idea that they should have a hand in helping change society," he says.

The arrest rate for girls has increased 103 percent from 1981 to 1997.

During the 1990's, the percentage of American teens getting pregnant, giving birth, and having abortions all dropped.

The kid's all right ... but some are not.

Although teen crime is down overall, offenses by girls have recently soared. And while drug use in general is declining, use of steroids and club drugs like Ecstasy is on the rise.

The percentage of girls under 15 who have had sex has increased from 11 percent in 1988 to 19 percent in 1995. And they seem to be getting more promiscuous: This fall, reports surfaced about kids engaging in risky group sex in well-to-do Conyers, Ga. The result was a syphilis outbreak of 20 or so people, some of them only 13 years old.

Julie Scelfo, Newsweek: A rise in girl-on-girl violence is making headlines nationwide and prompting scientists to ask why. ... significant rise in violent behavior among girls. According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Report, the number of girls 10 to 17 arrested for aggravated assault has doubled over the last 20 years. The number of boys arrested for weapons possession rose 22 percent between 1983 and 2003, while the number of girls increased by a whopping 125 percent. Today, one in three juveniles arrested for violent crimes is female. Part of this spike in violence is related to evolving sex roles. Historically, boys have received messages from the culture that connect masculinity with physical aggression, while girls received opposite messages, encouraging passivity and restraint. Now girls are barraged with images of "sheroes"—think Sydney Bristow on ABC's "Alias" or Uma Thurman's the Bride in "Kill Bill: Vol. 2" —giving them a wider range of role models and tacit permission to alter their behavior. Accordingly, says Spivak, some girls have "shifted from internalizing anger to striking out."

The women's movement, which explicitly encourages women to assert themselves like men, has unintentionally opened the door to girls' violent behavior. "I was at a JV lacrosse game, watching my granddaughter. We cheered like hell because she was being aggressive on the field," says Joan Jacobs Brumberg, professor of history, human development and gender studies at Cornell. "I don't want to blame women's liberation for violence among girls," cautions Brumberg, but "traditional femininity and passivity are no longer valued in young females."

### **Pornography**

...Very large numbers of children now have access to both hard-core and soft-core materials. For example:

- The average age at which male respondents saw their first issue of *Playboy* or a similar magazine was 11 years.
- All of the high school age males surveyed reported having read or looked at *Playboy*, *Playgirl*, or some other soft-core magazine.

- High school males reported having seen an average of 16.1 issues, and junior high school males said they had seen an average of 2.5 issues.
- In spite of being legally under age, junior high students reported having seen an average of 16.3 "unedited sexy R-rated films". (Although R-rated movies are not usually considered pornographic, many of them meet the normal definition of pornography.)
- The average age of first exposure to sexually oriented R-rated films for all respondents was 12.5 years.
- Nearly 70% of the junior high students surveyed reported that they had seen their first R-rated film before they were 13.
- The vast majority of all the respondents reported exposure to hard-core, X-rated, sexually explicit material. Furthermore, "a larger proportion of high school students had seen X-rated films than any other age group, including adults": 84%, with the average age of first exposure being 16 years, 11 months.

In a more recent anonymous survey of 247 Canadian junior high school students whose average age was 14 years, James Check and Kristin Maxwell (1992) report that 87% of the boys and 61% of the girls said they had viewed video-pornography. The average age at first exposure was just under 12 years.

33% of the boys versus only 2% of the girls reported watching pornography once a month or more often. As well, 29% of the boys versus 1% of the girls reported that pornography was the source that had provided them with the most useful information about sex (i.e., more than parents, school, friends, etc.). Finally, boys who were frequent consumers of pornography and/or reported learning a lot from pornography were also more likely to say that it was "OK" to hold a girl down and force her to have intercourse.

Dolf Zillmann and Jennings Bryant have studied the effects of what they refer to as "massive exposure" to pornography (1984). According to Zillmann and Bryant's research, pornography can transform a male who was not previously interested in the more abusive types of pornography into one who is turned on by such material. This is consistent with Malamuth's findings (described on p. 53) that males who did not previously find rape sexually arousing generate such fantasies after being exposed to a typical example of violent pornography.

Because the portrayal of rape is one of the favorite themes of pornography, a large and ever-changing supply of girls and women have to be found to provide it. Clearly, some women are voluntary participants in simulated acts of rape. But many of the rapes that are photographed are real (for examples, see Everywoman, 1988; Russell, 1993a).

NYTimes, August 2004: *Olympians Strike Pinup Pose, and Avoid Setting Off a Fuss*:<sup>234</sup> The American high jumper Amy Acuff has scored a rare double, even before the Games begin. She is on the cover of Playboy magazine, which hits the newsstands on Friday, coinciding with the opening ceremony, and she shares the cover of September's FHM Magazine with her fellow United States Olympians Amanda Beard, Haley Cope and Logan Tom... There has been little negative reaction to the Olympians' ubiquitous appearance in magazines. Even the United States Olympic Committee does not seem to object to the exposure.... Now, female athletes are showing off their bodies in nonsports magazines and making no apologies for it. ...Most of the athlete-models say they have enjoyed the publicity and look at it as a means to

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<sup>234</sup> Joe Drape

an end. In the 1996 Atlanta Games, at age 14, Beard gave the world an iconic image when she toted a teddy bear to the starting blocks for the final of the breaststroke. More recently, however, she has posed for magazines like FHM and Maxim in swimsuits that will probably not help her break the world record she holds in the 200-meter breaststroke.

January 2005: In a ruling in Pittsburgh, Judge Gary L. Lancaster of the Federal District Court threw out a 10-count criminal indictment that charged a California video distributor, Extreme Associates, and the husband-and-wife team that owns it, with violating federal obscenity laws. The company boasts of the particularly graphic content of its movies, with scenes of simulated gang rapes and other attacks on women, and its website declares, "See why the U.S. government is after us!"

While all sides agreed that the movies could be considered legally obscene, Judge Lancaster found that federal laws banning obscenity were unconstitutional as applied broadly to pornography distributors like Extreme Associates. The anti-obscenity laws "burden an individual's fundamental right to possess, read, observe and think about what he chooses in the privacy of his own home by completely banning the distribution of obscene materials," the judge wrote in a 45-page opinion.

The closely watched decision was a boon to the multibillion-dollar pornography industry, which has been fighting efforts by the Bush administration to crack down on what the government considers obscene material, particularly on the Internet.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales and his predecessor, John Ashcroft, declared the prosecution of pornography and child exploitation cases to be a high priority, and the Justice Department committed more lawyers and money to the issue in securing 38 convictions since 2001 in obscenity cases, officials said.

## **CHAPTER THREE: PERSONALITY AND GROWTH**

- i- Pleasure and happiness**
- ii- Meaning of life**
- iii- Individualism, creativity, innovation, self-image and self-worth**
- iv- Honesty, truth**
- v- Personal and interpersonal**

Richard Taylor wrote the following article in *Philosophy Now*, August/September 2000, *The Singer Revolution*:

[Most philosophers] assumes . . . that ethics has to do with one's treatment of others, whereas my concern is with how we treat ourselves. Thus, Singer finds human goodness exemplified in such people as Oskar Schindler and Raoul Wallenberg or, less dramatically, in blood donors – people who do good to others. I, on the other hand, think of a good person as someone like Beethoven, Picasso, Malcolm X or Amelia Earhart; people who distinguished themselves, not by what, if anything, they did for others, but what they did with themselves. Singer thus belongs to the Judeo-Christian tradition, which sees ethics in terms of right and wrong, whereas I am inspired by the classical Greek tradition, in which the basic concepts are virtue or fulfillment (*eudaimonia*). This is perfectly illustrated in Aristotle's ethics, where the concepts of moral right and wrong do not even appear, the aim being, instead, to find the marks of a truly superior man.

### *i- Pleasure and happiness*

Secular humanism leads to a desire by people to be happy here and now. Doing the right thing in this world in order to be rewarded in the world to come is replaced by doing what makes you happy in this world. For those who are intelligent and disciplined, this may mean delaying gratification until they have a job, or until they get married or until they have put their kids through college or even until they retire. This is the "Waiting for Godot" syndrome, where people are always waiting for that thing to happen in their lives when they are then really going to start living. For others, the happiness has to be more instant, and the desire to be gratified often allows for less moral forms of pleasure, such as binges on the university campus or extra-marital affairs.

The right to pursue pleasure is one of the supreme values upheld in the American Declaration of Independence. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are . . . endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that amongst these are . . . pursuit of happiness."<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> *Pursuing Happiness in Our Time*, John Leland: For more than two centuries, Jefferson's phrase has hovered over this fractious churning, drawing in as many combatants as there are notions of happiness. While most Americans can agree on definitions of life and liberty, the Declaration's first two inalienable rights, happiness is another matter. In a nation of immigrants and strivers, dropouts and resisters, sectarians and self-help gurus, Jefferson left behind an endlessly mutating set of fighting words. What he left vague, generations have vied to spell out, by force of law or just by force....With all due respect to life and liberty, it is this third battleground — characterized not as a fixed goal but a constant chase — that both animates Americans' daily lives and ties them in knots... Happiness "doesn't have any legal meaning," said Richard A. Posner, a federal appeals court judge who has written about rights and society. "Happiness is not a word on which you can found a lawsuit." Yet it shapes American life in both broader and more paradoxical ways: the pursuit of happiness is the defining passion of a country whose signature voice is the blues...It is at the mall and in the dull machinations of local government, where last week a Manhattan woman, protesting restrictions on dancing in most city nightspots, offered her own spin on Jefferson: "I have a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," said Jen Miller, who belongs to a group called Dance Liberation Front. "And what is the pursuit of happiness if not dancing?" "I don't think it meant pleasure in our sense of carnal pleasures or material wealth," Pauline Maier, professor of American history at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and author of *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence*, said. "Happiness demanded a good government. That seems so crazy to us. But when they spoke of the ideal, they used biblical language: 'to be at peace under your vine and fig tree with none to make you afraid.'" ...This logistic snarl, which turns the pursuit against itself, is only one piece of a broader legacy of disappointment, said Darrin M. McMahon, an associate professor of history at Florida State University who is writing a book on the history of happiness. "We're constantly being told that we've failed if we feel unhappy," Mr. McMahon said. "Happiness is not just a right but a duty. Now we're taught to believe if we're not happy all the time we need S.S.R.I.'s," he said, referring to the antidepressant drugs known as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors. By charging each American to pursue happiness, and making the pursuit a civic duty, Jefferson burdened his descendants with a condition Mr. McMahon called "the unhappiness of not being happy."...This condition reflects not the failed pursuit of happiness but the successes. Alexis de Tocqueville and Ralph Waldo Emerson, in the next century, saw that happiness was being pursued apace, if to unintended effect.

Pleasure may mean having fun or enjoying their leisure, and indeed Hollywood, theme parks, most of TV, the music and sports industries, as well as most popular literature is devoted to this idea. This idea of pleasure being something instantaneously gratifying is reinforced by a consumer orientation, the labeling of any pain as negative, sexual liberation, a victim rights-oriented society, a fast-food industry, and a whole host of other factors. Presidential hopefuls now talk in sound bytes and parents feel that their moral responsibility to their children is to condone whatever makes them happy. The idea of real pleasure, a higher spiritual happiness is rarely given equal consideration. Jewish law, in fact, eschews the idea of gratifying one's own desires as an end in and of itself.<sup>237</sup> On the other hand, the use of pleasure as a means of elevating the physical and reaching higher levels of spirituality is a great and noble principle of Judaism.

Secular people tend to scrutinize frum people to see whether they really are happy or not. Should they see a haggard-looking woman trying to get off the bus with two children and a carriage, they will use this as proof that frum people don't really look happy. But they do not do this with secular people. You will not find a secular person looking intensely at his co-travelers on a N.Y. subway to see whether they are happy. But let him or her come to Har Nof and they will immediately put everyone under the microscope.

The truth of the matter is that you cannot tell whether someone is happy or not by just looking at him or her. People are not happy because they crack a lot of jokes or seem to laugh in public a lot. Suicides often include people who appeared outwardly so happy. Happiness is not going "Whee!" at the fun-fare. Happiness is rather a function of an inward contentment with one's lot, serenity, a feeling of being fulfilled and having meaning in life and of feeling adjusted. The few studies that have been done have shown that on these variables, frum people do better than non-frum people.

Judaism, as the Taz points out, does not only provide happiness in the World to Come, but also in this world. The satisfaction of being spiritually full is in fact, the only way to be really happy even in this world.<sup>238</sup> There are in fact growing indications that Americans realize that their increasing materialism alone is not going to lead to happiness.

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"Our people are surrounded with greater external prosperity and general well-being than the Indians or Saxons," Emerson wrote, "yet we are sad but they are not."...The remedy, of course, is the pursuit of still more happiness, preferably through shopping. There is little cultural conflict in the pursuit of a washer/dryer or a nice set of clubs... Mr. Lears (a history professor at Rutgers University and author of "[Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America](#),") added that as market definitions of happiness began to grow with the economy in the 19th century, they brought their own doses of unhappiness. "The consumer culture," he said, "is about keeping us dissatisfied and unhappy, until we get the next thing. For Jefferson and his generation of thinkers, the whole notion of happiness was more sustainable, embedded in social and community responsibility."

<sup>237</sup> חינוך, מצוה שפז שלא נתור אחר מחשבת הלב וכו' (עמ' כד) (ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם):

"ועובר על זה ויחד מחשבתו בעניינים אלו שזכרנו שמביאין האדם לצאת מדרך דעת ותורתו השלימה והנטיה ולהיכנס בדעת המהבילים הכופרים רע ומר וכן מי שהוא תר אחר עיניו כלומר שהוא רודף אחרי תאוות העולם כגון מי שהוא משיס ליבו תמיד להרבות תענוגים גדולים לנפשו מבלי שיכוין בהם כלל לכונה טובה כלומר שלא יעשה כדי שיעמוד בריא ויוכל להשתדל לעבודת בוראו רק להשלים נפשו בתענוגים כל מי שהוא הולך בדרך זה עובר על לאו זה תמיד בכל עת עסקו במה שאמרנו ואין לוקין על זה לפי שאין זה דבר מסוים שנוכל להתרות העובר עליו כי מהיות האדם בנוי בענין שאי אפשר לו שלא יראה בעיניו לפעמים יותר ממה שראוי וכמו כן אי אפשר לו שלא תתפשט המחשבה לפעמים יותר מן הראוי על כן אי אפשר להגביל האדם בזה בגבול ידוע גם כי פעמים אפשר לעבור על לאו זה מבלי שום מעשה וכבר כתבתי למעלה שכל לאו שאפשר לעבור עליו מבלי מעשה אף על פי שעשה בו מעשה אין לוקין עליו לפי הדומה."

<sup>238</sup> Excerpts from Adam Potaky's article in Philosophy Now, June/July 2000, *Whatever Happened to Happiness?* Propose to some group of people (preferably one that can vouch for your good character) that "Adolf Hitler had a happy life." The looks you'll elicit will be blankly incredulous, confusedly nervous, or simply appalled. But why? You might go on to say that you were touched by seeing home movies of Adolf at home with Eva – you saw in his eyes a sparkle of domestic contentment, a certain *je ne sais quoi*. If this tactic seems too extreme, then simply do this thought experiment: a new biography of Pol Pot is published in which friends, associates, and confidants all agree that the man responsible for the death of three million Cambodians consistently had pep in his step, a sprightly mood, a puckish good humor. Even so, would you call him "a happy man?"

*Secrets of Happiness*: based on an article by Stephen Reiss, professor of psychology and psychiatry at Ohio State University in *Psychology Today Magazine*, February 2001.

Sometimes we are so consumed with our daily lives that we forget to look at the larger picture of who we are and what we need to be happy. We work, raise our children, and manage our chores, but it takes an extraordinary event such as a life-threatening illness, or the death of a loved one, to focus our attention on the meaning of our lives.

I faced death for the first time when I was told I needed a liver transplant a few years ago. I thought about the meaning in my life and why I lived the way I did. I started to question the Pleasure Principle, which says that we are motivated to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. When I was ill, I discovered exactly why I wanted to get better and continue living, and it had little to do with pleasure or pain.

Pleasure theory has been around since the days of ancient Greece and is well-represented in modern-day society and academic psychology. Socrates pondered the idea that pleasure is the basis of morality; he wondered if pleasure indicates moral good and pain indicates evil. Epicurus, the greatest of all pleasure theorists, believed that the key to a happy life was to minimize stomach distress, or anxiety, by changing one's attitudes and beliefs. His rational-emotive philosophy was popular for 700 years in ancient Greece and Rome.

More recently, *Playboy* founder Hugh Hefner used the pleasure theory to justify the sexual revolution of the 1960s. Psychologist N. M. Bradburn said that the quality of a person's life

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The degree to which possible claims about Hitler's or Pol Pot's happiness seem off-kilter, absurd or offensive is the degree to which one implicitly believes that happiness is not simply a mental state. Rather, we retain a residual but important sense of the type of 'happiness' that we learn from the Declaration of Independence we've a right to pursue. By denying that "Hitler had a happy life" could be a true statement, regardless of Hitler's subjective experience, we concede three things: first, that happiness can be evaluated from a third-person, objective perspective; second, that happiness entails ethical considerations; finally, that judgments about happiness are typically made within a whole-life frame of reference (the happy life doesn't end in an ignominious way).

Agreeing that happiness is the natural goal of life, moral philosophers after Plato also agreed that the best way to achieve a happy life was through the rational exercise of virtue. Aristotle said that a virtuous life was made happier by the fortunate accidents of good health, moderate wealth, and an untarnished reputation.

But what happens when we begin to define happiness simply as the absence of mental states considered to be inconvenient? Recently, the study of happiness – and much of its public discussion – has been undertaken by psychologists who present it as the reflex effect of some underlying biochemical cause. Here are several examples:

1.) Happiness is a good night's sleep. David F. Dinges, "chief of sleep and chronobiology in the psychiatry department" of a major American university, was recently quoted in an Associated Press news release: "some hours of the day, we're happier than others, and it's occurring inside us, not just in reaction to the world around us." The reporter then paraphrases Dinges: "The findings will pave the way for research that one day could help millions of depressed people live happier lives and aid people whose sleep patterns are disrupted by shift work or travel."

2.) Happiness is Prozac. In his 1993 book *Listening to Prozac*, Peter Kramer entertained as a possibility – and by the media was largely seen as advocating – what he called 'cosmetic psychopharmacology'. If Prozac (or drugs like it) can make mentally ill people well, why oughtn't they be used to make normal people perform – or at least feel – better than well? Why oughtn't Prozac be used to help modestly happy (or normally unhappy) people lead exuberant lives?

3.) Happiness is Dopamine. According to Jerry Adler's *Newsweek* essay, 'The Happiness Meter', each of us has a "happiness set point [that] is determined genetically," related, perhaps, to levels of the brain chemical dopamine. But bio-physical determinants are investigated with the ultimate aim of bio-physical correction, and surely further research will bring us dopamine-regulating drugs. (Such a development is foreseen and parodied by the Canadian comedy troupe, The Boys in the Hall, in their delicious film, *Brain Candy*.)

The body, we are told, can be fixed, and in the somatized world-view of the medical-industrial establishment, it follows that the mind can be improved. Most who are attracted to enhancing the brain's chemical make-up seek a happiness of mood, a mental state that often seems an end in itself. Our secular culture at large offers few arguments for why individual mental states may not be the greatest good; most any glossy magazine offers a heap of images suggesting that indeed they are. The advertising executive's ideal of happiness proceeds from a scent of cologne, a prospect of clothing, a claim about how good a car might feel ...

What of Plato, who in the *Philebus* proposed that the crudely hedonistic life is suited not to humans, but to shellfish?

can be measured by the excess of positive over negative feelings. So is maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain the ultimate key to human happiness? No. When I was in the hospital analyzing what made my life satisfying, I didn't focus on the parties. In fact, pleasure and pain were not even considerations.

If pleasure is not what drives us, what does? What desires must we fulfill to live a happy life? To find out what really drives human behavior, my graduate students and I asked more than 6,000 people from many stations in life which values are most significant in motivating their behavior and in contributing to their sense of happiness. We analyzed the results to learn how different motives are related and what is behind their root meanings.

The results of our research showed that nearly everything we experience as meaningful can be traced to one of 16 basic desires or to some combination of these desires. We developed a standardized psychological test, called the Reiss Profile, to measure the 16 desires.

### **Happiness defined**

Harvard social psychologist William McDougall wrote that people can be happy while in pain and unhappy while experiencing pleasure. To understand this, two kinds of happiness must be distinguished: feel-good and value-based. Feel-good happiness is sensation-based pleasure. When we joke around or have sex, we experience feel-good happiness. Since feel-good happiness is ruled by the law of diminishing returns, the kicks get harder to come by. This type of happiness rarely lasts longer than a few hours at a time.

Value-based happiness is a sense that our lives have meaning and fulfill some larger purpose. It represents a spiritual source of satisfaction, stemming from our deeper purpose and values. We experience value-based happiness when we satisfy any of the 16 basic desires – the more desires we satisfy, the more value-based happiness we experience. Since this form of happiness is not ruled by the law of diminishing returns, there is no limit to how meaningful our lives can be.

Malcolm X's life is a good example of both feel-good and value-based happiness. When racial discrimination denied him the opportunity to pursue his childhood ambition of becoming a lawyer, he turned to a life of partying, drugs and sex. Yet this pleasure seeking produced little happiness – by the age of 21, he was addicted to cocaine and sent to jail for burglary. He had experienced a lot of pleasure, yet he was unhappy because his life was inconsistent with his own nature and deeper values. He had known feel-good happiness but not value-based happiness.

After reaching rock bottom, he embraced the teachings of the Nation of Islam and committed himself to his most fundamental values. He led his followers toward greater social justice, married, had a family of his own and found happiness. Although he experienced less pleasure and more anxiety as a leader, he was much happier because he lived his life in accordance with his values.

### **The 16 basic desires**

You cannot find enduring happiness by aiming to have more fun or by seeking pleasure. What you need to do, as the 19<sup>th</sup> century philosopher J.S. Mill observed, is to satisfy your basic desires and take happiness in passing.

You do not have to satisfy all 16 desires, only the five or six most important to you. After you identify your most important desires, you need to find effective ways to satisfy them. There is a catch, however. Shortly after you satisfy a desire, it reasserts itself, motivating you to satisfy the desire all over again. After a career success, for example, you feel competent, but only for a period of time. Therefore, you need to satisfy your desires repeatedly.

How can we repeatedly satisfy our most important basic desires and find value-based happiness? Most people turn to relationships, careers, family, leisure and spirituality to satisfy their most important desires.

Value-based happiness is the great equalizer in life. You can find value-based happiness if you are rich or poor, smart or mentally challenged, athletic or clumsy, popular or socially awkward. Wealthy people are not necessarily happy, and poor people are not necessarily unhappy. Values, not pleasure, are what bring true happiness, and everybody has the potential to live in accordance with their values.

You can't buy happiness. A great windfall can make us joyous for the moment, but after a while we discover that there are all sorts of downsides to it. For example, lottery winners who work a day-to-day job may think that this will mean happiness for life. But it doesn't turn out that way. They find that their co-workers feel resentful. They lose friends because some try to borrow money. It's not exactly what they thought.

*Newsweek*, November 8, 1998:

37% of boomers polled in 1992 said they suffer from muscle aches and pains, 37% from headaches, 28% from fatigue and 18% from anxiety.

The following *CNN* article appeared in 1999:

America is doing well by any material measure, and for the most part is thoroughly enjoying the experiences. But there are also signs amid the prosperity that people are asking whether this is all there is, whether driving cars the size of tanks and parking them in garages the size of gymnasiums is truly the national purpose.

Polling shows that most Americans view themselves as less cynical and more compassionate than even a few years ago, and that they are inclined to do more for the less fortunate now that they have taken care of themselves. There has been a surge in volunteerism. Charitable giving is up across income levels.

At the same time, sociologists and commentators report that people feel more stressed, that they do not have enough time for their families, that they sometimes see their quality of life failing to keep up with their improved finances.

*Disgruntled in the Midst of Plenty:*

Gregg Easterbrook's "The Progress Paradox". In the West in the past 50 years, life has gotten steadily better. In the U.S. real income has more than doubled since 1960. Some 70% of Americans now own the place they live, as opposed to fewer than 20% a century ago. Their homes and apartments are larger and more comfortable, too, with once rare or unheard of amenities like central heat and air conditioning. Whereas undernourishment was common until recently, today our biggest problem with food is that we eat too much of it-and for much longer: Average life expectancy has nearly doubled since 1900, and it keeps rising... Mr. Easterbrook cites this data to show that the number of people in America who describe themselves as "very happy" has decreased slightly since 1950 (to 6% from 7.5%) and that the percentage of those who consider themselves "happy" has remained at 60%. Meanwhile, the incidence of depression seems to have increased sharply, which leads Mr. Easterbrook to the paradox referred to in his title: Life gets better; people feel worse.<sup>239</sup> He suggests a number of

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<sup>239</sup> Consider ... examples in which society's success seems to be backfiring on our health or well-being: Higher productivity is essential to rising living standards and to the declining prices of goods and services. But higher productivity may lead to fewer jobs. Early in the postwar era, analysts fretted that automation would take over manufacturing, throwing everyone out of work. That fear went unrealized for a generation, in part because robots

causes: from the media's myopic focus on disaster to the stress of modern living to what he calls "collapse anxiety," the fear that our hard-won gains may come crashing down.<sup>240</sup>

Restless searches for spiritual fulfillment and backlashes against consumerism are longstanding features of American society, and are magnified during periods of affluence, when people have the luxury of looking beyond the next paycheck.

Culture warriors, especially on the right, have long warned of a dangerous emptiness in the national soul.

And it may be that the whole phenomenon this time around is nothing more than an attempt by self-absorbed baby boomers to feel better about themselves, especially given the

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and computers weren't good at much. Today, near-automated manufacturing is becoming a reality. Newly built factories often require only a fraction of the work force of the plants they replace. Office technology, meanwhile, now allows a few to do what once required a whole hive of worker bees....Cars are much better than they were a few decades ago - more comfortable, powerful and reliable. They are equipped with safety features like air bags and stuffed with CD players, satellite radios and talking navigation gizmos. ...But in part because cars are so desirable and affordable, roads are increasingly clogged with traffic. Today in the United States, there are 230 million cars and trucks in operation, and only 193 million licensed drivers - more vehicles than drivers! Studies by the Federal Highway Administration show that in the 30 largest cities, total time lost to traffic jams has almost quintupled since 1980... The proliferation of cars also encourages us to drive rather than walk. A century ago, the typical American walked three miles a day; now the average is less than a quarter mile a day. Some research suggests that the sedentary lifestyle, rather than weight itself, is the real threat; a chubby person who is physically active will be O.K. Studies also show that it is not necessary to do aerobics to get the benefits of exercise; a half-hour a day of brisk walking is sufficient. But more cars, driven more miles, mean less walking. ....It's not just in your mind: Researchers believe stress levels really are rising. People who are overweight or inactive experience more stress than others, and that now applies to the majority. Insufficient sleep increases stress, and Americans now sleep on average only seven hours a night, versus eight hours for our parents' generation and 10 hours for our great-grandparents'. Research by Bruce McEwen, a neuroendocrinologist at Rockefeller University in New York, suggests that modern stress, in addition to making life unpleasant, can impair immune function - again, canceling out health gains that might otherwise occur. Prosperity brings many other mixed blessings. Living standards keep rising, but so does incidence of clinical depression. Cellphones are convenient, but make it impossible to escape from office calls. E-mail is cheap and fast, if you don't mind deleting hundreds of spam messages. The Internet and cable television improve communication, but deluge us with the junkiest aspects of culture....Agricultural yields continue rising, yet that means fewer family farms are needed. Biotechnology may allow us to live longer, but may leave us dependent on costly synthetic drugs. There are many similar examples. Increasingly, Western life is afflicted by the paradoxes of progress. Material circumstances keep improving, yet our quality of life may be no better as a result - especially in those cases, like food, where enough becomes too much. "The maximum is not the optimum," the ecologist Garrett Hardin, who died last year, liked to say. Americans are choosing the maximum, and it does not necessarily make us healthier or happier.

<sup>240</sup> NYTimes, June 12 2005: *Who's Mentally Ill? Deciding Is Often All in the Mind*, by Benedict Carey: The release ... of a government-sponsored survey, the most comprehensive to date, suggests that more than half of Americans will develop a mental disorder in their lives. The study was the third, beginning in 1984, to suggest a significant increase in mental illness since the middle of the 20th century, when estimates of lifetime prevalence ranged closer 20 or 30 percent... some experts are convinced that modern life in the West - especially urban life - is more stressful than in earlier periods, and that the increased numbers of illnesses in the psychiatric association's diagnostic manual is a reflection of that fact. Dr. Millon... tells the story of borderline personality disorder. In the late 1970's, he was among a small group of psychiatrists and psychoanalysts who settled on the term "borderline" to mean people who fell somewhere between neurotic and psychotic. Some doctors in the room hated the term; others liked it; several said it was meaningless. But after hours of debate, reversals of opinion and bruised egos, the diagnosis was born: borderline personality disorder, to describe a needy, scattered, uncertain self, or personality. Borderline is now one of the most popular diagnoses in psychiatry, an umbrella term that covers a multitude of symptoms that all seem to point to a similar problem. "This is seems to me a kind of diagnosis for our age, this complex, changing, fluid society in which young people are not allowed to internalize a coherent picture of who they are," Dr. Millon said. "There are too many options, too many choices, and there's a sense of, 'I don't know who I am - am I angry, am I contrite, happy, sad?' It's the scattered confusion of modern society."

persistence of the gap between rich and poor and the unforgiving nature of the global economy.

In fact, the front-runner for the Republican nomination, Gov. George W. Bush of Texas, seemed to recognize the opportunity particularly early, and built his campaign around the theme “Prosperity with a Purpose.”

That purpose, it seems, is as broad and vague, as it is indisputably admirable: that nobody gets left behind. And if the main beneficiaries are meant to be the poor and the poorly educated, the act of addressing their needs is intended to make those in a position to help feel more fulfilled as well.

“There’s a sense out there in America that for years people strived for prosperity, and now they’ve achieved it but feel incomplete,” said Mark McKinnon, Bush’s media consultant. “Governor Bush has articulated a message that many Americans feel, which is that it’s not enough for our wallets to be full if our hearts are empty.”

Both parties are acutely conscious of a vague but persistent sense among many relatively well-off families that their children are not getting the attention they deserve, that they hardly know their neighbors anymore, that their lives are getting harder, not easier.

Ruminating last week on the new politics of prosperity, a senior member of the Clinton administration said that while the revived focus on poverty fighting was well established, there would also be a greater focus on what he called “trans-economic” issues. “There’s a kind of inner angst, beyond-materialism kind of dynamic that’s emerging,” he said. “It’s ‘Tipper Gore was right’ kind of stuff: Is there a movie you can take your kids to? Are we raising a nation of Nintendo zombies?”

What may be new is the degree to which such social and family concerns are no longer articulated un-self-consciously just by the religious right, which claimed them as its own during the 1980’s. Instead, they have become part of what Amitai Etzioni, a sociologist at George Washington University, called the “new, more moderate language of the moral center.”

*A Return to Modesty, Discovering the Lost Virtue* by Wendy Shalit:

I did, to come to college and discover that in fact the feminists were not exaggerating. All around me, at the gym and in my classes, I saw stick-like women suffering from anorexia. Who could not feel for them? Or I would hop out to get a bagel at night and see a student I knew – who must have weighed all of 70 pounds – walk into our corner campus hangout, Colonial Pizza. Oh, good, I would think, she’s finally going to eat. I would smile and try to give off see-isn’t-eating-fun vibes. No, in fact she hadn’t come to eat. Instead she mumbled weakly, looking like she was about to faint: “Do you have any Diet Mountain Dew, please? I’m so tired ... I have a paper, and I can’t stay up because I’m so, so *tired* ... I have a paper ... and it’s due tomorrow ... any Diet Mountain Dew?” Then in the dining halls I would observe women eating sometimes ten times as much as I and then suddenly cutting off our conversation. Suddenly, um, they had to go, suddenly, um, they couldn’t talk anymore. Until that moment I hadn’t actually realized that some women really did make themselves throw up after bingeing.

*New York Times Poll, April 2000:*

Do you personally know someone who has tried to commit suicide, or don’t you?

- |        |     |
|--------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 51% |
| 2. No  | 48% |

9. NS/Ref 1%

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: It bothers me sometimes that my life did not turn out as I expected it would.

1. Agree 35%  
 2. Disagree 63%  
 9. NS/Ref 2%

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I wish I got more credit for what I do and who I am.

1. Agree 48%  
 2. Disagree 50%  
 9. NS/Ref 2%

Do you ever daydream about being famous, or don't you?

1. Yes 32%  
 2. No 68%  
 9. NS/Ref 1%

Have you talked at least once to a therapist about any problems you may have had?

1. Yes 33%  
 2. No 66%  
 9. NS/Ref --

**ii- Meaning of life**

Human beings share a universal need to lead meaningful lives.<sup>241</sup> People who lack meaning in their lives suffer huge crises, often debilitating. Leo Tolstoy's *A Confession* was the first work of the period of his intensive study at the Gospels, after the completion of the *War and Peace* and *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* and *The Power of Darkness*. In it he tells us that marriage swept all cosmic concerns out of his head: "the new conditions of happy family life completely diverted me from all search for the general meaning of life ... So another fifteen years passed ... But five years ago something very strange began to happen to me ... I experienced moments of perplexity and arrest of life, as though I did not know what to do or how to live ... They were always expressed by the question: What does it lead to?" (*A Confession*, trans. by A. Maude, OUP 1940.)

"Before occupying myself with my Samara estate, the education of my son, or the writing of a book, I had to know *why* I was doing it." (p.16: emphasis original)

"I could find no reply at all. The questions would not wait. They had to be answered at once, and if I did not answer them it was impossible to live." (p.17)

Many people seek to become more successful in their careers, their relationships, their hobbies, seeking to gain meaning by being really good at something, thereby actualizing their potential. In the *NY Book Review* there are separate sections for fiction, non-fiction and self-help. Self-help books, how to become a better this or a better that, often sell more than any of

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<sup>241</sup> There is a Greek legend about Sisyphus who is doomed to carrying a stone to the top of a mountain only to see it roll down again and so on repetitively ad infinitum. All who have heard this story throughout the ages have regarded this as the epitome of meaninglessness. Yet we need to understand what exactly it is about Sisyphus' fate which is meaningless. If for, example Sisyphus would carry a different stone up the mountain each time, would his life then be meaningful. The answer, I think we would all say is still no, because he is still engaged in a pointless exercise.

the other categories. Many of these books are about spirituality, even when they are coming to tell one how to become a better businessman, etc. The self-help industry is an enormous enterprise today.<sup>242</sup>

*In Praise of the Meaningless Life*, Bob Sharpe, *Philosophy Now*, Summer 1999 page 15: “What is the purpose of life?”. . . Life is presumed to have a single overall purpose... The man who devoted his life to the care of sufferers of AIDS had a single overall purpose, the fulfilling of which we would say gave value to his life. But it seems that Hitler also had an overall purpose in life which he went a long way towards fulfilling. He all but destroyed European Jewry. But we would not conclude thereby that his life had positive value.... Most human lives are meaningless in that they have no overriding purpose. It does not follow that they have no value or significance. Indeed they may achieve more and do less harm than those who are devoted to some grand plan.

Sensitive people usually recognize that meaningful life requires some spiritual component. The great poet Yeats wrote to John O’Leary in 1892 that ‘the mystical life is the center of all

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<sup>242</sup> Daniel McGinn wrote the following article in *Newsweek*, January 10, 2000, *Self Help U.S.A.*: Anthony Robbins ... Dreamlife.com ... Last week its stock stood at \$16 a share, putting Robinson’s stake at more than \$300 million. At a mega-event in Hartford, Conn. last month, Robbins’s act was, as always, part church revival, part rock show, all centered on his core message: train your mind to achieve “outstanding performance,” the same way athletes tone muscles to hit home runs. At times the audience listens quietly. A few times each hour the music rises and Robbins roams the stage, jumping and pumping his fists while speakers blast upbeat rock like Tina Turner’s “Simply the Best.” Ten thousand fans (admission \$49) leap, Rocky-style, arms in the air. “This isn’t about jumping around looking like an idiot,” Robbins says during a calmer moment. “It’s about training your body to go into an exalted state.” After three hours the lights dim. Ten thousands hands raise as the throng repeats Robbins’s pledge dozens of times. “I am the voice. I will lead, not follow ... Defy the odds. Step up! Step up! Step up! I am the voice ...” Folks who think this is so much blather would be surprised by how many mainstream followers Covey attracts. Consider the number of uniforms at a Covey symposium in October. More than 470 attendees are military officers or government workers, their \$700 admission and travel paid for with tax dollars. Among them: 18 staffers from the Clark City, Ohio, Department of Human Services, where they’re spending \$60,000 in an attempt to teach the “7 Habits” to troubled families and welfare recipients. Taxpayers may object, says the Clark City program’s coordinator, Kerry Pedraza, but “we’re being fiscally responsible’ trying to prevent problems, teaching families to be families.” John Gray ... \$10 million-a-year income stream. He charges \$50,000 per speech (in 1999 he gave 12). He’s trained 350 Mars and Venus “facilitators,” who pay him for “certification” and distribute his books at 500 smaller workshops each month. This year he’ll launch a “Men are from Mars ...” syndicated talk show. He’s planning an expanded Web site offering “romantic accessories,” from candles and aromatherapy to flowers and lingerie. Helping couples is a nice niche, but lately spiritual self-help has become the industry’s real growth segment. That genre’s rising star, Iyanla Vanzant, explains why: “People have lost faith in each other,” she says. The world is full of “people who hurt in their heart ... who cry alone at night.” The good news is they’re buying her books like mad (current best seller: “Yesterday, I Cried”). Vanzant’s rise is remarkable: an abused child who was raped at 9, pregnant at 16 and had two failed marriages by 25, she earned a law degree, has written nine books and founded a “spiritual empowerment” ministry. For good or ill, more people seem destined to give these ideas a try. Historians describe how 18th- and 19th-century self-improvement focused on character virtues – thrift, industriousness – and became wildly popular. In the mid-20th century, they say, the movement took a turn that reduced its popularity. “It became more therapeutic, less concerned with education,” says University of Virginia historian Joseph Kett. “Therapeutic” implies that devotees had a problem that needed fixing, creating a stigma. Today some trend watchers – including the gurus themselves – detect a subtle shift back toward an era in which self-improvement becomes less like therapy and more like physical training: stigma-free, beneficial for anyone. “It’s a lifestyle now,” says Robbins. “It’s gone from being the thing somebody did when they have a problem to the thing you do if you’re a peak performer.” And there’s no time like the new millennium to pump up your life. So act now. The gurus are standing by. Mostly the gurus’ customers are ... regular people, searching for practical tips on navigating complicated relationships and work lives. None of what they read becomes gospel; rather, they mix and match mantras the way duffers use golf tips. “This is support,” Kurowski says. “It’s someone showing you ‘Here’s a road map of where you need to go.’” “By the end of the session you feel like you can conquer the world.” She’s saving up for Tony Robbin’s \$6,995 weeklong “Life Mastery” course.

that I do and all that I think and all that I write ... I have always considered my self a voice of what I believe to be a greater renaissance – the revolt of the soul against the intellect – now beginning in the world.<sup>243</sup>

In the article we quoted in the section above (**Pleasure and happiness**) we showed that although America was doing well by any material measure, the American people are not necessarily seeing this as an increase in their quality of life. The main problem has been the failure of a purely materialistic existence to provide meaningful existence, and without that people will simply be miserable. The article mentioned the front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination, Gov. George W. Bush of Texas building his whole campaign around the theme “Prosperity With a Purpose.”

Victor Frankel explains the problem as follows:

“The affluent society is an undemanding society by which people are spared tension. However, people who are spared tension are likely to create it either in a healthy or unhealthy way.” (The Will to Meaning, p. 45)

Even though American society often sends messages that tension-avoidance is a worthy goal, just the opposite, says Frankel:

“Von Bertalanfy could show that even within biology the homeostasis principle is no longer tenable. Goldstein could offer evidence, on the grounds of brain pathology, for his contention that the pursuit of homeostasis, rather than being a characteristic of the normal organism, is a sign of disorder. Only in the case of disease is the organism intent on avoiding tensions at any rate ... Allport, ... Maslow as well as Charlotte Buhler have aired similar objections.” (The Will to Meaning, p. 32)

Man needs meaning, and striving to meaning means that man must reach beyond himself:

“Because of the self-transcendent quality of human existence ... being human always means being directed and pointing to something or someone other than itself.” (ibid., p. 25)

“Like happiness, self-actualizing is an effect, the effect of meaning fulfillment. ... If he sets to actualize himself rather than fulfill a meaning (out there in the world), self actualization immediately loses its justification.” (ibid., p.38)

“What man needs first of all is the tension created by direction.” (ibid. p. 47)

Kirk Douglas, Climbing the Mountain – My search for meaning:

The most important thing I learned from my studies is that all the greats of the Bible came from dysfunctional families. It was reassuring to find out that they, like us, all had problems they had to overcome – none of them were perfect. But the reason they are in the Bible is precisely because, in spite of that, they did something meaningful with in life. (pg. 143)

The following is based on an article by Barbara Kantrowitz in *Newsweek*, April 3, 2000 with comments inserted:

In America today, it is in particular the baby-boomers generation, now hitting their 50s, who are grappling with meaning in their life. This is just the age when you realize how short life is, when sometimes you see your parents die and when, over the half-way mark of our life, you see how little you achieved.

For so long, the generation born between 1946 and 1964 (an estimated 78 million Americans) has been in collective denial as the years added up. Boomers couldn't be getting older –

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<sup>243</sup> In Terence Brown: The Life of W.B. Yeats – A Critical Biography

although, amazingly, everyone else seemed to. But while they're still inclined to moments of self-delusion ("No one would ever guess that I'm 50"), they can no longer escape intimations of their own mortality.

Their own parents are aging and dying, making many of them the elders in their families. "There's the feeling that you're the next in line, and there's nothing between you and the abyss," says Linda Waite, director of the Center on Aging at the University of Chicago. When they look in the mirror, they see gray hair and wrinkles. Their bodies are beginning to creak and they're worried that all those years of avoiding the gym and stuffing their faces with Big Macs may add up.

At work, they're feeling the threat of a new generation fluent in technology and willing to work 24/7. Corporate America seems to value experience less, and has come to view older workers in the same way investors view Old Economy stocks: sure, they perform at a steady pace, but these younger, untested companies/employees have so much *potential*.

It is eloquent testimony to the human condition that boomers are so caught up with the meaning of their lives. But it is also a black indictment of American life that what many boomers desperately latch on to, is worth not much more than they were doing before.

Take Kate Donohue who, when she turned 50 in January, 2000, saw the big day as a chance to fix the things in her life she didn't like. Her 83-year-old father was in the advanced stages of Parkinson's disease; her mother, 79, though active, suffered from a heart condition and glaucoma. "Seeing my parents get so tiny is the way it hits me," Donohue says. "How many more years do I have?"

So what was the great leap of growth she made, so significant that she featured prominently in the *Newsweek* article (April 3, 2000) from which much of this information is taken. She made three resolutions: to worry less, to "make more space" for herself by not being so busy, and to be more adventurous – more like the woman she was in her 20s and 30s when she routinely set off on solo trekking and biking trips. In August, she will head off to Africa to learn more about West African dance, a longtime passion.

Settling down, working on one's character the hard way, is still anathema. Boomers switch jobs, and even careers (not to mention spouses) in a never-ending search for fulfillment. "The first generation to grow up with remote controls, we invented channel-surfing and attention-deficit living," says journalist Michael Gross in his new book, *My Generation*. "That taught us to be infinitely adaptable, even in the baby-boom cliché of 'diminished expectations.'"

It helps that they're better educated and richer than previous generations and, as their parents die, expected to benefit from the largest transfer of inherited wealth in history. In a new Heinz Family Philanthropies/Newsweek Poll nearly half of all boomers said their personal financial situation was "good" or "excellent." Unlike their parents, they don't have to rely on Social Security or limited pensions. A healthy economy and a strong stock market give them new options as they phase out of full-time employment. They may decide to freelance, work part-time or start their own companies.

To be fair, there are many boomers who are embracing their more spiritual side, motivated by a need to give back – an echo of the anti-materialism of the 60's. Marialice Harwood, 53, a marketing executive with the Minneapolis Star Tribune, had her moment of reckoning three years ago when her brother, then 51, died of a heart attack. "My faith is more important to me," says Harwood, a Roman Catholic. "I care about different things." She's downsized to a town house now that her kids are grown and, although she intends to work until she's 65, "when I retire, I don't see myself in a resort community. I see myself in the inner city working with kids. That's my dream." But Harwood and her kind are in a definite minority.

It is not that boomers do not want to be more spiritual; but a life-time of being rebellious and breaking convention means that they feel the need to invent everything themselves. And the invention of a perfect system of spiritual ethics is a task so gigantic that all but one person, Abraham, ever managed the task.

While their parents – seared by the Depression and wars – craved security, boomers have always embraced the new and the unknown. This means that they are not alert to the wisdom of the ages. Boomer women, in particular, have learned to march ahead without a road map. “Ours was the generation that broke the rules,” says Jeanne Giordano, 51, an urban planner in Manhattan. “Anything was possible. You could speak back to your parents. You didn’t have to get married.” She found meaning in her work, including designing the master plan for the restoration of Grand Central Terminal. Now, like many boomers, she’s thinking closer to home. “What I would like is to have a relationship that takes me into my final chapters,” she says. “I no longer look at it as an imposition. The one thing I haven’t done is rely on someone, trust someone to be a part of my life.” Indeed, what most Torah observant people get to do by the time they are 22, boomers are finally figuring out is worthwhile when they get to their 50s. Of course by then it is too late to have a family in the normal sense of the word.

### **Vitality of religion**

Adapted from Paul Johnson in *Reader’s Digest*, December 1999 and *Time*, October 4, 1999, *Inside China’s Search for Its Soul*, by Jaime A. Florcruz and Joshua Cooper Ramo, p. 37:

As the year 1900 approached, many leading thinkers, including George Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells, argued that the dawning 20<sup>th</sup> century would mark the close of history’s religious phase. As late as 1957, Julian Huxley, the first director-general of UNESCO, wrote in anticipatory triumph, “Operationally, God is beginning to resemble not a ruler but the last fading smile of a cosmic Cheshire cat.”

But here we are, at the threshold of a new millennium (2000), and G-d is alive and well in the hearts and minds of countless believers. And all the evidence suggest that religion will still be flourishing another thousand years from now, for it continues to strike new roots and regain lost territories. In West Africa, Christians whose ancestors were pagans two centuries ago have built one of the largest churches in the world, roughly the size of St. Peter’s in Rome. In Russia, the building that for 67 years housed the Museum of Religion and Atheism is now a church of the Orthodox Christian faith, crowded with worshippers. In the United States, nearly half the population attend a place of worship with regularity. Catholicism is spreading in South Africa, Protestant Evangelicalism in Latin America.

Religion is even growing again in China, despite 50 years of efforts by the communist government to subvert it. Many Chinese are looking to Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity and even brand new religions to slake a thirst that all the Cokes in the world won’t abate.

It’s hard to get an exact count of believers in China. The government’s sharply edited numbers say there are 100 million, but outsiders suggest it could be more than double that. Beijing does say that since the 1980’s, more than 600 Protestant churches have opened each year in China. More than 18 million bibles have been printed, some on the presses of the People’s Liberation Army. And the official Chinese Catholic Church is opening youth summer camps in parts of China. The world’s religious leaders see this liberation of China’s 1.3 billion souls as epochal. Says Candelin: “The revival of the Christian church in China is by far the biggest and most significant in the history of Christianity.”

Outside the mainstream religions – and outside the supervision of the government – are hundreds of independent Chinese religions. Many of these religions are not monotheistic.

However, the point being made here is that man has a huge, spiritual need to take care of his soul. This is a universal of human nature, one that Darwinism is totally incapable of explaining. So great is this need that all attempts to suppress it have failed dismally. As recent examples in China have shown, people will give vent to their spiritual urges even at risk of their liberty, and sometimes lives.

Even the Chinese government has been forced to recognize this. Hence, the new Shanghai stock exchange is built in the shape of a hollowed square to help trap positive energy, a nod to the ancient geomantic rituals of feng shui. And members of China's new middle class are embracing both state-of-the-art technology to transform their economy and 5,000-year-old superstitions to support their lives.

### *iii- Individualism, creativity, innovation, self-image and self-worth*

Individualism, or in the American ideal, rugged individualism, is the primary result of all of the above. The self is stressed over the community<sup>244</sup>, people are encouraged to learn how to assert themselves and how to project their personalities, and it is generally believed that the system is so set up that anyone who applies him/herself will make it. America in particular is known as the land of opportunity. (See **Chapter One - x – The Great American Dream**).

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<sup>244</sup> *Me, Me, Me*: ...Darwin's survival-of-the-fittest theory clearly implies that selflessness is an evolutionary dead end. And nobody passes Econ 101 without a lesson on how it would be irrational for people to do anything but pursue their own financial self-interest. In experiments over the past 30 years, Arizona State University psychologist Robert Cialdini has shown that human heroism seems to be controlled by the same "selfish genes" that make animals more likely to rescue relatives. Researchers have found that people, on average, say they would risk more to rescue a son or daughter than a cousin, and risk more for a cousin than for than for a stranger.

But Cialdini is not stumped by the Officer Devittes of the world. Early man traveled in tribes of 25 to 50 people, most of them related, he explains. Darwinian natural selections rewarded those who helped out their fellow tribe members, he believes. So the people we call heroes today are those who, for some still mysterious reason, seem to have adopted all humans as members of their "tribe." To an extent, heroes are genetic accidents. At least some physical abilities, as well as personality traits such as fearlessness and universal empathy, are at least partly determined by genetics. Some heroism seems to be culturally determined, raising concerns here in America. Children raised in more communal societies, such as Israeli kibbutzim, score higher in heroic traits such as altruism. And one survey found that the more young adults study freemarket economics (as a growing number of American college students have), the less generous they are. But Cialdini is hopeful his latest experiments will show how we can boost our heroism quotient. He has found that asking people to imagine themselves in another person's place increases the chance they'll help the person in a time of need.

The most resonant heroes, such as Abraham Lincoln, arise when a society faces a single crucial question, such as slavery...

Scott Peck writes in *The Different Drum*: Ayn Rand [in] *Atlas Shrugged*, made a seemingly compelling case for rugged individualism and unrestrained free enterprise. ... One day I realized that there were essentially no children in the book, which was a panoramic novel of around a thousand pages recounting the sweep of society and the drama of many lives. ... It was as if children did not exist in her society. ... And of course that is exactly one of the social situations in which rugged individualism and unrestrained capitalism fall short, where there are children and others like children who need to be cared for. (pgs. 236-7)

Joannie Fischer, U.S. News & World Report, June 28/July 5, 2004: *Self-Reliance; Those Rugged Individuals*: ...individual freedom. Given... pursue the heart's desires, our utopian vision claims, each of us has the ability – and the right – to make our dreams come true... individualism... The self-made man...When the United States first came into being, most people had never even heard the word *individualism*. "Our fathers only knew about egoism," said Tocqueville, who helped coin the term to capture the new way of life in the fledgling nation...The first American individualists were thoroughly steeped in a one-for-all mentality on the assumption that all moral persons would devote themselves to the good of the group...Not until the mid-1800s did the pursuit of individual fulfillment come to connote a retreat from the group. Ralph Waldo Emerson first preached the concept in his 1841 essay "Self-Reliance"... he declared. "Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist..." "I have only one doctrine," he wrote: "the infinitude of the private man." Emerson's friend Henry David Thoreau went further, deeming it necessary for him to physically part with society to develop his own integrity. And Walt Whitman, in poems such as "Song of Myself," introduced to the country what Berkely sociologist Robert Bellah calls "expressive individualism," the valuing of personal pleasures such as sensuality and leisure above all else – something that would have been anathema in the religion-dominated Colonies. This new preoccupation with private experience came at a time when the nation's urban areas were growing more crowded and dangerous and the ideal of universal self-employment was being eroded by a burgeoning underclass... Emerson cursed himself for parting with the occasional coin, asking, "Are they *my* poor?" It was in this atmosphere that Hortio Alger pumped out more than 100 "rags-to-riches" tales of destitute orphans transformed into wealthy successes by ceaseless effort, ingenuity, and integrity. The moral of the story: Prosperity is possible for anyone willing to try hard enough. Even the day's most generous philanthropists bought into the notion. Andrew Carnegie, himself a rags-to-riches success, who later gave nearly \$400 million to fund the arts and libraries, preached the money should never be "wasted" on the poor. This by-your-bootstraps mentality didn't soften until the Great Depression left a quarter of the nation unemployed, a harsh reality check on the naïve belief that nothing could block the truly motivated individual. Since then the nation has created a vast safety net of financial aid. We still prize self-reliance, but we are a relatively generous people, with 3 out of 4 households donating to charity.

An important corollary of being an individual is the stress on creativity and innovation<sup>245</sup>. William Cook put it thus:

“New ideas are fostered in America like no place on earth. We’re not only constitutionally free to say and do almost anything, we have the means and talents to give life and form new thoughts. Whether it’s a new way to teach music, a new product, or a new company, these notions, big and small, transform the landscape of American life. Silicon Valley, the world’s premier incubator of innovation, is the best example. In that yeasty zone stretching south of San Francisco, someone with a good idea for a new product can go to a local venture capital firm for start-up funding, as well as for advice and guidance. Other talented and adventuresome people are ready to join up to help develop the new idea, perhaps for a share of stock in the nascent enterprise. Costly new factories are not required; existing manufacturers are eager to make the product on contract. Perhaps, most important, failure is not fatal.”

“There is no stigma attached to being involved in a company that doesn’t make it,” says Charles Holloway. .... In addition, the government encourages innovation.

### **Positive self-image**

Despite the stress today on individualism (or perhaps because of it), on projecting one’s personality, on making it and becoming someone, we live in an era of unprecedented problems of positive self-image. Never before have so many people felt so badly about themselves. The more self-help books that come out with the “how to’s” (how to become a millionaire, how to improve your marriage, your body, your position at work, etc.) the less people seem to value themselves. This is because they are trying to substitute externals for their real self.

In general, people use the words, “positive self-esteem” when describing this issue of self-image. It is interesting that this phrase rather than the words “self-respect” are used. Self-esteem is judgmental, usually vis-à-vis the outside world. I esteem myself because I am good at sports, am a manager in my company or for some other reason. In other words self-esteem is usually a function of standing out from others, usually by adopting the standards of success of the outside world. Self-respect is more basic – it requires the person to intrinsically respect himself, not for what he has become, but simply because he is a human being with infinite potential, trying to grow (whether like or unlike everyone else).

One way of seeing this is by noticing that love relationships between husband and wife do not work because of the esteem we hold our spouses in. Relationships are built on respect, which grow into trust, which extend into love and ultimately a feeling of unity. But they have nothing to do with esteem – on the contrary we may esteem everyone on the block of the opposite sex more than our spouses – but we would and should still love our spouses more.

Self-esteem, then, is a part of the external, superficial standards which Western societies have imposed on us; self-respect is a part of our deeper selves – drawing on values which really matter.

### **Intrinsic and unique worth**

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<sup>245</sup>The Jewish perspective, however, is that the workplace should only be a secondary source of human creative output. Also, creativity in the workplace is first and foremost a function of honesty to one’s employee. And, the way we spend leisure time is a true barometer of how creative we are (*Affluence, Work, Creativity - A Jewish Perspective*).

Therefore in Hebrew, the term used is כבוד האדם לעצמו. The word כבוד comes from the word 'kaved' the weight and true value of something. Hence the כבוד which someone has for him/herself is the intrinsic and unique worth they know themselves to have – intrinsic because they are made in the צלם אלוקים; unique because G-d creates everyone with a potential, and therefore a role, which has never been nor will ever be in the history of the world.

#### בשבילי נברא העולם

This is what it means when we say that בשבילי נברא העולם. Is this not a selfish doctrine? And what about all the other billions of people in the world – was the world not also created for them? Indeed, this saying cannot mean that I should look on the world as only for my use – for this would contradict many tenets of Judaism, e.g., ואהבת לרעך כמוך (which does not mean I should love my fellow-man but rather I should love לרעך, I should love for my friend, i.e., whatever I have I should want that my fellow-man should also have). "The world was created for me" means that whatever I am exposed to in this world requires my maximum response, using all my potential, because my uniqueness impacts on the world in an unprecedented way, a way for which no-one else can substitute. I should therefore imagine that the entire responsibility of those aspects of the world with which I come in contact rests on me. I will determine whether they achieve their purpose or not.

#### Assertiveness

Our society is not only getting faster, it is getting louder and brighter. It takes an increasingly powerful personality to be recognized. We see this in the emergence of shock jocks like Howard Stern and outrageous characters like Dennis Rodman. People have to call attention to themselves in ways that are more and more extreme just to be noticed at all. That, of course, puts the shy at a further disadvantage. (*Psychology Today*, Jan./Feb 2000)

*iv- Honesty, truth*

John Leo wrote this article in the *U.S. News and World Report* in 1999:

In his new book Leading With My Chin, Jay Leno tells a mildly embarrassing story about himself on the old Dinah Shore television show. The only problem with the incident is that it didn't happen to Leno. It happened to another comedian, Jeff Altman.

Leno told Josef Adalian of the *New York Post* last week that he liked the story so much he paid Altman \$1,000 for the right to publish the tale as his own. (In fairness, Leno claimed that something similar had happened to him on the same show, but he wished to "meld" his story with Altman's to acquire a better ending.)

Leno's stretching of the truth is a minor matter, but there is something fitting about it as a reflection of the current cultural moment. The problem isn't lying. That is certainly too strong a word for what Leno did, and at any rate, a great deal of lying can safely be assumed to be a constant in human history. What seems new today is the amazing casualness about whether something is true or not, as if other goals – success, feelings, self-esteem and self-assertion – are all so overwhelmingly important that truth doesn't matter very much and often isn't even perceived as a competing value.

David Gergen wrote the following article in the *U.S. News & World Report*, November 30, 1998, *Standing up for the truth*: At the end of the day, we should recognize that the heart of this case is not about Clinton, nor is it about Starr. It is about us, the citizenry: What standards do we demand from our elected representatives, and do we apply them equally, even to a popular president? ...His defenders would have us believe that lying under oath, especially about sex, is a trivial violation of the law. Not so. The *New York Times* reviewed over 100 cases of perjury in state and federal courts and found that scores of people have been sent to jail or otherwise punished for lies under oath.

This episode challenged our political standards, too. After scandals of the past, as in Watergate and Iran-contra, politicians concluded that the one thing worse than a crime is a coverup. The lesson: "If caught, come clean." Should the president now go scot-free, we will teach the next generation very different, more cynical rules: "If you're questioned, deny; if pressed, attack; if caught, lie. And if you just string it out long enough the public will grow bored and walk away from the scandal." Our lawmakers must...pass a joint resolution of censure. It should sternly proclaim, "These offenses may not be impeachable, but they are unacceptable. Whatever his other virtues, the president's acts have violated his public trust and stand condemned."

Jesse Jackson is a black minister and once Presidential hopeful who preaches morality. Jesse Jackson's confessed that in 1998, at the very moment he was providing pastoral counseling to the White House's resident adulterer, President Clinton, he was carrying on an extramarital affair of his own, with a subordinate, who later gave birth to his child. Judging from the way in which his fellow civil rights leaders are rallying to his defense, most African Americans will probably pardon Jackson for this sin. Just ask Clinton, Marion Barry, Mike Tyson, O.J. Simpson and a host of other bad actors who have been welcomed back into the fold. But if we let Jackson back into a position of leadership after he completes his promised sabbatical from public life, we're out of our minds.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Souce unknown

Peg Tyre wrote the following article: Among the Great Pretenders: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who falsely claimed credit for a front-page scoop at The Harvard Crimson; Ronald Reagan, who repeatedly claimed to have witnessed the liberation of German concentration camps, and Supreme Court nominee Douglas Ginsburg, who exaggerated his litigation experience on behalf of the Justice Department. In 1997 millionaire ambassador Larry Lawrence was disinterred from Arlington National Cemetery after it became clear he'd lied about serving in the Merchant Marine. Al Gore falsely claimed that he and his wife were the model for the hot romance in the best-selling 1970s novel "Love Story." And in 1999 Toronto Blue Jays manager Tim Johnson was fired after it surfaced that his oft-told tales of combat in Vietnam were false. What makes them do it? Psychologists say some people succeed, at least in part, because they are uniquely attuned to the expectations of others. And no matter how celebrated, those people can be haunted by a sense of their own shortcomings. "From outside, these people look anything but fragile," says Dennis Shulman, a New York psychoanalyst. "But inside, they feel hollow, empty."

John Schwartz: *When No Fact Goes Unchecked*, October 31, 2004: Remember atoms? People of a certain age were told in school that atoms were the smallest indivisible chunk of an element, and that they could be broken down into three relatively simple component parts: protons, neutrons and electrons. Simple. Solid. Comforting. Over time, what we know of the tiny world has gotten a lot fuzzier. The more scientists analyzed atoms, zapping them with ever more brutal jolts of energy, the murkier atomic innards became. There are particles with mystifying names like quark, lepton and neutrino... indivisible chunks of information are being subjected to microscopic scrutiny and high-energy attacks in the realm of public discourse, which has made things look a little less solid and more malleable than they might once have seemed. Facts, for better or worse, have been stripped of the meaning that authority figures, like politicians and news anchors, once imposed on them, said Clay Shirky, an adjunct professor in the interactive telecommunications program at New York University...facts themselves becomes more open to interpretation. "It's much more difficult to get people to agree on what a fact is, or whether it's important," he said. ...

NY Times February 27, 2000: *The Paradox of American Democracy: Elites, Special Interests, and the Betrayal of Public Trust*, John B. Judis: America has experienced a steady growth of industry and invention over this century — not interrupted even by the Great Depression. Today, our country is awash in new technology — from the World Wide Web to gene splicing — and abounds in brilliant entrepreneurs, such as Microsoft's Bill Gates, TCI's John Malone, and Federal Express's Frederick W. Smith. ... But while we have hurtled forward in technology and enjoy global hegemony in cruise missiles and designer jeans, we have not made similar progress in our political institutions. As we look out upon a new century, American politics seems in far worse shape than it did at the last turn of the century<sup>247</sup>. ... The political system has become ruled by large contributors, who through

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<sup>247</sup> Congress appears incapable of passing significant reform legislation. In 1993 and 1994, Congress couldn't produce any bill aimed at reducing the growing ranks of Americans who have no health insurance. After the 1996 election, when there was widespread public support for campaign reform, Congress could not even pass the most perfunctory measure. During the 1997-98 session, the only large-scale legislation adopted was a \$218 billion transportation bill that, while needed to modernize crumbling infrastructure, was heavily larded with pork-barrel projects. Even the onset of large budget surpluses, which would allow generous expenditures in education and healthcare, failed to shake Congress's torpor. Much of Congress's time has been consumed by such "hot button" issues as "partial birth" abortion, gay rights in the military, and funding for UN birth control programs and for the National Endowment for the Arts — issues that are of very little concern to most Americans. Worse still, hearings and investigations into scandals — from the imbroglio over Clarence Thomas's Supreme Court nomination in 1991 to the charges of perjury against President Clinton in 1998 — have overshadowed any consideration of the country's future. These scandals have generally not involved the flagrant misuse of

loopholes in the porous campaign laws hold the balance of power in elections and popular referenda. ...Domestic politics is dominated by public opinion polling. Former officials who used to provide dispassionate guidance on difficult foreign or domestic policy issues have become lobbyists and consultants for American and foreign businesses. Former senators call for the privatization of Social Security without revealing that they are on the boards of directors of securities firms that would stand to benefit mightily from such a change. Former presidential candidates lobby for businesses that, as politicians, they had denounced only a year before. Bankers, business leaders, and corporate lawyers who, in past generations, might have been driven to devote part of their time to public service and to the greater good confine their public activity to lobbying on behalf of their own firm or industry. And academics and policy intellectuals who brought a spirit of scientific objectivity and disinterest to political deliberations lend their name and expertise to think tanks and policy groups that are dedicated to promoting the narrowest interests of business contributors....

### History on wings

Self-esteem was cited as the reason for a peculiar bit of teaching, revealed last week, at two Afrocentric schools in Milwaukee. Both schools have been teaching children that black Egyptians once had wings and flew freely around the pyramids until the Europeans arrived, killing off all the natural fliers.

Pierre Salinger's claim that a Navy missile shot down TWA Flight 800 surely qualifies as a horrible example of evidence-free assertion. His position seemed to be this: I am 100 percent sure I'm right that a Navy missile shot down Flight 800, but if I'm wrong, well it's the first time in 30 years. For what it's worth, a survey by *George* magazine showed that 41 percent of Americans think the government is conducting a cover-up about Flight 800.

A minor sign of the new casualness is that we are beginning to see movies that explicitly announce on screen that they are real-life nonfiction – but turn out to be fiction after all. *Fargo*, for instance, said it was real, but it wasn't, and *Sleepers'* claim to be nonfiction has been called bogus by many journalists and critics. The real message here is: we say it's true; maybe it's not, but if it plays well, who cares?

This casualness in popular culture is reinforced by trends in the intellectual world, which hold that truth is socially constructed and doesn't exist in the real world. Voices, stories and narratives are important, an idea that drips into the popular culture as a contempt for truth or a belief that each group must determine its own private truth through experience and assertion.

This is why wacky group history is so rarely challenged. The radical Afrocentric theory that Africans invented democracy, philosophy and science, which were then stolen by the Greeks, is clearly false. But almost all Egyptologists and historians stayed silent during the long controversy. The struggle to state and defend the truth was conducted almost solo by Mary Lefkowitz, the classicist from Wellesley College who wrote *Not Out of Africa*. She suffered a

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government funds or an attempt to subvert the Constitution, but instead petty corruption and inappropriate personal behavior. They have been triggered by partisan struggles for power inside Washington, and arouse only passing or prurient interest outside of Washington. The president and the executive branch are equally paralyzed, and not simply by the opposition in Congress.

NY Times, Jan 04: A recent poll of New Yorkers commissioned by the state's chief judge, Judith S. Kaye, found that fully 83 percent believe that campaign contributions influence judges' decisions. In New Jersey, a majority of voters said state legislators place their personal financial concerns ahead of the public interest... The fact is, faith in most institutions has been declining for decades... Trust in government peaked after the New Deal and World War II. It has declined since the war in Vietnam and Watergate. A New York Times/CBS News Poll has been asking Americans for a generation whether they think they can trust the government in Washington to do what is right. The portion who replied "always" or "most of the time" plunged to 18 percent in 1995, just about when the Gingrich Revolution deposed House Democrats, rebounded to a patriotic 55 percent after 9/11 and sunk back to 36 percent last summer.

lot of abuse and ostracism for stubbornly insisting that the truth mattered. For her silent peers who looked the other way, it obviously didn't.

Alas, we are awash in conspiracy theories: One Clinton or another killed Vince Foster, the Holocaust is a myth, IQ tests are rigged against minorities, the crack epidemic in urban America is a CIA plot, the CIA or maybe the Cubans killed John F. Kennedy. With the glut of information and the rise of talk radio and the Internet, data are available to suit any theory. Anyone can join the discussion, and all theories can be made plausible. Joel Achenbach, writing about all this last week in the *Washington Post*, said: "The danger is that we are reaching a moment when nothing can be said to be objectively true, when consensus about reality disappears. The Information Age could leave us with no information at all, only assertions."

Maybe so, but the best antidote is to care about the truth more than feelings or group rights, and to teach respect for truth in our schools. On the grounds that even tiny fibs matter, one vote here for asking Jay Leno to delete all autobiographical material that actually comes from somebody else's life.

David Oshinsky, NY Times, 28 August, 2000: *History Has Broken Into Pieces*: The writing of American history underwent a significant change in the 1960's and 70's, one that remains in place today. Not only did the Vietnam War trigger a backlash against national institutions, especially the state, but the growth of "liberation" movements also led many women, blacks, gays and other groups to demand their own distinctive, "usable past." Increasingly, younger historians shifted their emphasis from the public life of the nation to the private lives of its citizens. By the 1980's an explosion of historical categories -- race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality -- had supplanted the more traditional fields of political, diplomatic and intellectual history. Those formerly on the margins of American society now got the lion's share of attention. But critics of the new history have worried about the fragmentation of the past, with each group telling its own story, on its own terms, in its own "authentic" voice. And even advocates wondered at times about the place of these categories in the larger scheme of things. ...In 1994, the prestigious *Journal of American History* surveyed its members about the state of the profession. Those who responded -- mostly academic historians -- agreed that the greatest improvement in the field was the inclusion of "more diverse people from the past." Yet when asked to list the greatest weaknesses, the respondents placed "narrowness," "political correctness" and "divorce from the public" at the top of the list.

The following was condensed from *U.S. News & World Report* (11/22/99) reported in a lead article entitled *The Cheating Game, 'Everyone's Doing It,' From Grade School to Graduate School* by Carolyn Kleiner and Mary Lord:

In a recent survey conducted by *Who's Who Among American High School Students*, 80 percent of high-achieving high schoolers admitted to having cheated at least once; half said they did not believe cheating was necessarily wrong – and 95 percent of the cheaters said they have never been caught. According to the Center for Academic Integrity at Duke University, three quarters of college students confess to cheating at least once. And a new *U.S. News* poll found 90 percent of college kids believe cheaters never pay the price.

### **Cheating arts**

Academic fraud has never been easier. Students can tamper electronically with grade records, transmit quiz answers via pager or cell phone, and lift term papers from hundreds of web sites. At the same time, an overload of homework, combined with intense pressure to excel in school from hard-driving peers and parents, makes cheating easy to justify – and hard to

resist. Valedictorians are as likely to cheat as laggards, and girls have closed the gap with boys.

Sissela Bok, author of Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life, suspects part of the problem may be that “people are very confused [about] what is meant by cheating.” When does taking information off the Internet constitute research, and when is it plagiarism? Where does collaboration end and collusion begin? The rules just aren’t that clear, particularly given the growing number of schools that stress teamwork. The result: widespread homework copying among students and a proliferation of sophisticated sixth-grade science projects and exquisitely crafted college applications that bear the distinct stamp of parental “involvement.”

Most alarming to researchers is the pervasiveness of cheating among adolescents. 50 years ago, only about 1 in 5 college students admitted to having cheated in high school. Today, a range of studies shows that figure has exploded, to anywhere from three quarters of students to an astonishing 98 percent.

“I realize that it’s wrong, but I don’t feel bad about it, either, partly because I know everyone else is doing it.”

“If I ever stole a test or something to that degree, I’d feel guilty. But just getting a couple of answers here and there doesn’t bother me.”

“It’s not a big deal because it’s just a mindless assignment,” rationalizes Melissa. “It’s not a final or a midterm. I mean, I understood how to do it; I just didn’t have the time.”

Most distressing to teachers is the way plagiarism, copying, and similar deceits devalue learning. “We’re somehow not able to convince them of the importance of the process,” laments Connie Eberly, an English teacher at J. I. Case High School in Racine, Wis. “It’s the product that counts.” For too many students and their parents, getting that diploma – that scholarship, that grant – is more important than acquiring knowledge. “I’m just trying to do everything I can do to get through this school,” acknowledges Brad, a junior at an exclusive Northeastern boarding school and a veritable encyclopedia of cheating tips. (Feign illness on test days and get the questions from classmates before taking a makeup exam. Answer multiple-choice questions with ‘c’ – a letter that can easily be altered and submitted for a regrade.) “If this is the only way to do it, so be it,” he says.

The pressure to succeed, particularly on high-stakes tests, can drive students to consider extreme measures. Two months ago, nothing mattered more to Manuel than doing well on the SAT. “If your score is high, then you get into [a good school] and scholarships come to you,” explains the high school senior from Houston, who is going to have to cover half of his college expenses himself. “If not, then you go to some community college, make little money, and end up doing nothing important the rest of your life.” Desperate for a competitive edge, he started poking around the Net and soon stumbled upon an out-of-the-way message board where students bragged about snagging copies of the test. Manuel posted his own note, begging for help; he says he got a reply offering a faxed copy of the exam for \$150 but ultimately chickened out.

While crib notes and other time-honored techniques have yet to go out of style, advanced technology is giving slackers a new edge. The Internet provides seemingly endless opportunities for cheating, from online term-paper mills to chat rooms where students can swap science projects and math solutions. They also share test questions via e-mail between classes and hack into school mainframes to alter transcripts; they use cell phones to dial multiple-choice answers into alphanumeric pagers (1C2A3D) and store everything from algebra formulas to notes on *Jane Eyre* in cutting-edge calculators. Some devices even have infrared capabilities, allowing students to zap information across a classroom. “I get the sense

there's a thrill to it, that 'my teachers are too dumb to catch me,'" says English teacher Eberly.

Reasonably priced surveillance equipment, including hidden cameras and tape recorders, is taking cheating to a whole new level. Colton cites numerous cases in which video cameras roughly the size of a quarter were hidden in a test taker's tie (or watch or jacket) and used to send information to an outside expert, who quickly compiled answers and called them back into a silent pager. "If [students] spent as much time on their studies as they do on cheating, we'd be graduating rocket scientists all over the place," says Larry McCandless, a science teacher at Hardee Junior High in Wauchula, Fla., who recently caught his students using sign language to signal test answers to each other.

If students do spend homeroom copying assignments from one another, it may be because schools send such mixed messages about what, exactly, constitutes crossing the line. Mark, a senior at a Northeastern boarding school, doesn't believe that doing homework with a friend – or a family member – is ever dishonest and blames the people at the head of the classroom for any confusion over collaboration. "I mean, some of my teachers say you can't do it, some say two minds are greater than one," he explains, breaking into a laugh. "I obviously agree with the latter."

He isn't the only one. In a new study of 500 middle and high school students, Rutgers University management Prof. Donald McCabe, a leading authority on academic dishonesty, found that only one-third said doing work with classmates was cheating, and just half thought it was wrong for parents to do their homework. So where, exactly, does teamwork end and cheating begin? It's not always that clear, even for grown-ups. According to the *U.S. News* poll, 20 percent of adults thought that doing homework for a child was fair. It's no wonder that teachers see students of every age handing in essays that contain words they can't pronounce, much less define.

"You know your child is going to lose, because [other classmates'] parents are doing the work."

The *U.S. News* poll found that 1 in 4 adults believes he has to lie and cheat to get ahead, and it seems this mentality is communicated to children. "Students see adults – parents, businessmen, lawyers – violating ethical standards and receiving a slap on the wrist, if anything, and quickly conclude that if that's acceptable behavior in the larger society, what's wrong with a little cheating in high school or college?" says Rutgers Professor McCabe. "Too often the messages from parents and teachers come off as, 'You need to do everything you can, at all costs, to get to the top.'" "You never see any gratification for being a good person anymore," says Audrey James, a senior at the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics in Durham. "Once you get to high school, it's all about who has the grades and who's going to get the most scholarships."

In the same edition, a different article reported about adults:

Studies show that students who cheat are likely to make it a way of life. So it's no surprise that today's workplace is full of adults who lie about everything from job experience to company earnings.

Nearly three-quarters of job seekers admitted lying on their resume in a recent survey by SelectJOBS.com, a high-tech industry employment site. Offenses ranged from omitting past jobs (40 percent) to padding education credentials (12 percent). Recruiters blame the web, where unsavory applicants can crib from 5 million resumes currently online.

### **Upping the ante**

In today's stock market, companies feel more pressure than ever to deliver bigger profits, faster-growing sales, and, of course, higher stock prices. The pressure has led to some large-scale dissembling of a different sort: An increasing number of companies have begun to "manage" their earnings numbers, forming, in the words of Securities and Exchange Commission Chairman, Arthur Levitt, "a web of dysfunctional relationships" to do so. Analysts gauge a company's earnings prospects, relying heavily on company guidance. Companies, in turn, take liberties where they can to meet analysts' forecasts. "Independent" auditors, who naturally want to retain clients, don't stand in the way.

Are investors cheated when companies "manage" their earnings? Maybe not. Are they misled? "Absolutely," says Charles Hill of the investment research firm First Call. "As more Americans save for retirement in the stock market, a culture of gamesmanship over the numbers is weaving itself into the fabric of accepted conduct," Levitt says. (Margaret Loftus and Anne Kates Smith)

Michael Kinsley wrote the following article in *Time Magazine*, *The Great Spin Machine*:

Spin is ... indifference to the truth ... describing a reality that suits your purposes.

A small example of the distinction between spinning and lying occurred when Dick Cheney had his latest heart attack. George W. Bush told reporters, "Secretary Cheney is healthy. He did not have a heart attack." That would have been a lie if Bush had known otherwise. But his campaign aides said he hadn't been told, which is easy to believe. So it wasn't a lie. It was just a spin. Journalists would have leaped on evidence that Bush knew about Cheney's heart attack, but they didn't care that he spoke without knowing anything one way or another. They hate the liar but love the spin.

Americans are right to feel that our political culture is infused with dishonesty. We are obsessed with fibbing about facts because this is less elusive than the real problem, which is intellectual dishonesty. This means saying things you don't really believe. It means starting with the conclusion you wish to reach and coming up with an argument. It means being untroubled by inconsistency between what you said yesterday and what you say tomorrow, or between standards you apply to your side or the other guy's. It means, in short, spin.

The Florida recount was five weeks of spin overload.

When Republicans and Democrats disagree along party lines about, say, a tax cut, it's at least theoretically possible that everyone involved is expressing carefully considered and sincerely held views. But until November 7, there was no obvious liberal or conservative view about manual recounts or absentee-ballot applications. A chad was not a subject to invoke the passions.

So when a vigorous argument about dimples breaks down precisely along party lines, that is a coincidence that requires explanation. If fate had put Gore and Bush in the other's place on election night, the drama of the next five weeks would have had everybody playing the opposite role.

Lawyers are, in a way, the fathers of spin. They call it "vigorous representation of my client." The central distinction of spin – between knowingly lying and ignorantly or disingenuously misleading – is a positive ethical obligation of the legal profession. Lawyers are forbidden to do the former and required to do the latter as best they can. This includes what's known as "arguing in the alternative" – the practice, infuriating to lay people, of saying, "My client never stole the money, Your Honor, and anyway, he gave it all to charity."

Lawyers are free, of course, to take any side of a given case and are not restricted in what they say on behalf of today's client by what they may have said on behalf of yesterday's. In

recent years, these necessary lawyerly hypocrisies have leached out of the courtroom as lawyers have taken on broader roles and big legal cases have become multifront battlefields. The most important battlefield is often the courthouse steps.

And if politicians didn't spin, reporters and pundits would have nothing to interpret and act knowing about.

The year 2000 was also a good one for spin in the private sector, where it goes by the name of marketing.

Have you seen the ubiquitous TV commercial for the hotel chain where, the ad suggests, every employee is prepared to give a guest detailed strategic advice and encouragement for a forthcoming business meeting? Unlike a more traditional advertising claim – that, say, an angel flies out of a can of cleanser to banish grime with her magic wand – this hotel's claim is not inherently or obviously metaphorical. Yet it's clearly not true – a point that probably didn't even occur to the producers of the ad or 99% of its viewers. The deception is not on purpose; few are deceived. But the process of producing a spin for this hotel chain apparently did not include reality as even a minor consideration.

2000 began with all those Super Bowl dot.com commercials aimed at brand awareness, where you did in fact become aware of the brand. You just had no idea what the brand did. ("ProtoLink: the Enterprise Solution for Internet Strategy. Because the future is where decisions will be made.") And throughout the year there were more and more of those ads for prescription drugs that didn't supply the smallest clue to what disease the miracle drug was supposed to cure. ("Sue, have you tried Protozip? It sure worked for me!" "No, Donna, I haven't, but I'm going to call my doctor today and ask for Protozip." Announcer: "Protozip should not be used by pregnant women or anyone who wears button-down collars. Bankers with a net worth of more than \$5 million should consult a doctor before using.")

These ads are naked spin. They don't distort reality; they simply dispense with it. That's why 2000 was the year of spin. It couldn't go further in 2001. Could it?

v- *Personal and interpersonal*

We are undergoing “interpersonal disenfranchisement.” Simply put, we are disconnecting from one another. Increasingly, we deal with the hyperculture cacophony by cocooning – commuting home with headphones on while working on our laptops. We go from our cubicle to the car to our gated community, maintaining contact with only a small circle of friends and family. As other people become just e-mail addresses or faceless voices at the other end of electronic transactions, it becomes easier and easier to mistreat and disrespect them. The cost of such disconnection is a day-to-day loss of civility and an increase in rudeness. And, again, the shy pay. They are the first to be excluded, bullied or treated in a hostile manner.

As we approach the limits of our ability to deal with the complexities of our lives, we begin to experience a state of anxiety. We either approach or avoid. And, indeed, we are seeing both phenomena – a polarization of behavior in which we see increases in both aggression, marked by a general loss of manners that has been widely observed, and in withdrawal, one form of which is shyness. Surveys we have conducted reliably show that over the last decade and a half, the incidence of shyness has risen from 40% to 48%.

In “*Self-Help Nation*,” Mr. Tiede attempts to chronicle the ascendance of the self-help movement. He notes that there is now a satellite television station called “*The Success Channel* that is given over to ‘positive, life-enhancing programming, 24 hours a day.’” He traces the proliferation of self-improvement gurus from Norman Vincent Peale back in the 1950’s to such current stars as Deepak Chopra and John Bradshaw. He inventories the advice dispensed by authors on how to get thin, get rich; improve your mind, your body, your sex life; and overcome pain, shame and poor self-esteem – in short, how to achieve total happiness and fulfillment.

One author Mr. Tiede quotes warns women about three different types of men who are emotional “Hitlers.” Another insists that there are exactly 22 distinct types of men in the world. “Financial success is available to everyone,” writes Terry Cole-Whittaker, “an aspiring minister” in her book “How to Have More in a Have-Not World.” Act “as if it’s impossible to fail,” advises Norman Monath in “Know What You Want and GET IT.” (Culled from NY Times book review)

Daniel McGinn wrote the following article in *Newsweek*, January 10, 2000, *Self Help U.S.A.*:

Anthony Robbins ... Dreamlife.com ... Last week its stock stood at \$16 a share, putting Robinson’s stake at more than \$300 million.

At a mega-event in Hartford, Conn. last month, Robbins’s act was, as always, part church revival, part rock show, all centered on his core message: train your mind to achieve “outstanding performance,” the same way athletes tone muscles to hit home runs. At times the audience listens quietly. A few times each hour the music rises and Robbins roams the stage, jumping and pumping his fists while speakers blast upbeat rock like Tina Turner’s “*Simply the Best*.” Ten thousand fans (admission \$49) leap, Rocky-style, arms in the air. “This isn’t about jumping around looking like an idiot,” Robbins says during a calmer moment. “It’s about training your body to go into an exalted state.” After three hours the lights dim. Ten thousands hands raise as the throng repeats Robbins’s pledge dozens of times. “I am the voice. I will lead, not follow...Defy the odds. Step up! Step up! Step up! I am the voice ...”

Folks who think this is so much blather would be surprised by how many mainstream followers Covey attracts. Consider the number of uniforms at a Covey symposium in October. More than 470 attendees are military officers or government workers, their \$700

admission and travel paid for with tax dollars. Among them: 18 staffers from the Clark City, Ohio, Department of Human Services, where they're spending \$60,000 in an attempt to teach the "7 Habits" to troubled families and welfare recipients. Taxpayers may object, says the Clark City program's coordinator, Kerry Pedraza, but "we're being fiscally responsible, trying to prevent problems, teaching families to be families."

John Gray ... \$10 million-a-year income stream. He charges \$50,000 per speech (in 1999 he gave 12). He's trained 350 Mars and Venus "facilitators," who pay him for "certification" and distribute his books at 500 smaller workshops each month. This year he'll launch a "Men are from Mars ..." syndicated talk show. He's planning an expanded web site offering "romantic accessories," from candles and aromatherapy to flowers and lingerie.

Helping couples is a nice niche, but lately spiritual self-help has become the industry's real growth segment. That genre's rising star, Iyanla Vanzant, explains why: "People have lost faith in each other," she says. The world is full of "people who hurt in their heart ... who cry alone at night." The good news is they're buying her books like mad (current best seller: "Yesterday, I Cried"). Vanzant's rise is remarkable: an abused child who was raped at 9, pregnant at 16 and had two failed marriages by 25, she earned a law degree, has written nine books and founded a "spiritual empowerment" ministry.

For good or ill, more people seem destined to give these ideas a try. Historians describe how 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century self-improvement focused on character virtues – thrift, industriousness – and became wildly popular. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, they say, the movement took a turn that reduced its popularity. "It became more therapeutic, less concerned with education," says University of Virginia historian Joseph Kett. "Therapeutic" implies that devotees had a problem that needed fixing, creating a stigma. Today some trend watchers – including the gurus themselves – detect a subtle shift back toward an era in which self-improvement becomes less like therapy and more like physical training: stigma-free, beneficial for anyone. "It's a lifestyle now," says Robbins. "It's gone from being the thing somebody did when they have a problem to the thing you do if you're a peak performer." And there's no time like the new millennium to pump up your life. So act now. The gurus are standing by.

Mostly, the gurus' customers are ... regular people, searching for practical tips on navigating complicated relationships and work lives. None of what they read becomes gospel; rather, they mix and match mantras the way duffers use golf tips.

"This is support," Kurowski says. "It's someone showing you 'Here's a road map of where you need to go'"

"By the end of the session you feel like you can conquer the world." She's saving up for Tony Robbins' \$6,995 weeklong "Life Mastery" course.

**CHAPTER FOUR: IS THE WORLD A BETTER  
PLACE?**

We wrote in the introduction to this book that many see Western society as the best example of a good society.<sup>248</sup> There is no question that at a physical level, the U.S.A. in particular,<sup>249</sup> but most of the world in general, became a much better place than the world ever was over the last century. Consider the following:

*Total Population*<sup>250</sup>

1900: 76 million (Men: 39 million / Women: 37 million)

2000: 281 million (Men: 138 million / Women: 143 million)

*Number of millionaires*

1900: 3,000

2000: 3.5 million

*Average income*

1900: \$8,620 a year

2000: \$23,812 a year<sup>251</sup>

*Average work week*

1900: 60 hours

2000: 44 hours

*Passenger autos registered in U.S.*

1900: 88,000

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<sup>248</sup>

... American culture nourishes its heretics, mavericks, and oddballs, celebrates its young, welcomes the newly arrived, and is dramatically open to the energy and talent rising from the bottom. No other country has the capacity to organize and respond to a huge market, vast and diverse populations, and rapidly changing economic condition. No other country has met the requirements of an emerging industrial system in an information era that needs people to be mobile and flexible, both physically and psychologically.

... As the poet Ovid once said: "Let others praise ancient times. I am glad to be alive in these." (Mortimer Zuckerman, Dec. 27, 1999, U.S. News and World Report)

<sup>249</sup>

The Economist, January 2002, reported the following GDP's per head:

FRANCE:	\$24,600
NORWAY:	\$38,700
UNITED KINGDOM:	\$25,500
RUSSIA:	\$2,390
AUSTRALIA:	\$20,400
JAPAN:	\$31,900
NEW ZEALAND:	\$13,800
SOUTH KOREA:	\$9,530
CANADA:	\$24,900
UNITED STATES:	\$37,300
BRAZIL:	\$3,030
MEXICO:	\$6,110
SOUTH AFRICA:	\$2,570
EGYPT:	\$1,170
ISRAEL:	\$17,400
SAUDI ARABIA:	\$8,110

<sup>250</sup>

Roger Simon and Angie Cannon: U.S. News & World Report August 6, 2001

<sup>251</sup>

However, not everyone has gained from America's increased wealth. Millions of children are slipping deeper into poverty, despite the nation's healthy economy, a research group, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, reported in December, 1999. Although the number of poor children has declined significantly since 1993, those children who remain poor have slipped somewhat deeper into poverty. The average relative incomes of poor children in 1998 fell \$1,604 below the poverty line – \$133 more than in 1995. The Census Bureau reported earlier this year that there were 13.5 million poor children.

Americans are throwing out 96 billion pounds of food each year – more than enough to feed all of the nation's hungry people. This amounts to trashing a quarter of their food supply every day.

2000: 130 million

*Miles of paved road*

1900: 10

2000: 4 million

*Adults completing high school*<sup>252</sup>

1900: 15%

2000: 83%

*Life expectancy for men*

1900: 46.3 years

2000: 73.6 years

*Life expectancy for women*

1900: 48.3 years

2000: 79.7 years

**Scientific progress**

In just the past four decades, we have amassed more scientific knowledge than was generated in the previous 5,000 years. Indeed, 90 percent of all the scientists who ever lived are alive today, and they are using more powerful instruments than ever existed before.<sup>253</sup>

“Moore’s Law of computer power doubling every 18 months or so is now approaching a year. Ray Kurzweil, in his book The Age of Spiritual Machines, calculates that there have been 32 doublings since World War II and that the singularity point – the point at which total computational power will rise to levels so far beyond anything that we can imagine that it will appear nearly infinite and thus be indistinguishable from omniscience – may be upon us as early as 2050. When that happens, the decade that follows will put the 100,000 years before it to shame.”<sup>254</sup>

**Material well-being**

*Percentage of homes with a flush toilet*

1900: 10%

1997: 98%

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<sup>252</sup> Mortimer Zuckerman: That unique American institution – a free, universal, public high school ... At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, only 6.4 percent of young Americans graduated from high school. By the middle of the century, that figure had reached 59 percent. Today, it is 83 percent. Then look at our colleges. After the GI Bill of Rights was passed in 1944, college education surged ... By the end of the century, over 27 percent of the population, ages 25 to 29, had completed four or more years of college – up from 1 percent at the beginning of the century and 16.4 percent in 1970. (Dec. 27, 1999, U.S. News and World Report)

<sup>253</sup> Mortimer B. Zuckerman, Dec. 27, 1999, U.S. News and World Report:  
Zuckerman continues: Scientific information is now increasing twofold about every five years. Information doubles every 2½ years. New knowledge makes most technology obsolete in just five to seven years. Even computers are out of date in less than two years. Recently, IBM announced that it is going to build a supercomputer working 500 times faster than the fastest computer today. “Blue gene” it is called, and its target speed is a thousand trillion calculations each second!

... It took five months for the news of the discovery of the New World by Columbus to reach Spain. It took just 1.3 seconds for Neil Armstrong’s historic step on the moon to reach millions of viewers through television.

... In 1932, Albert Einstein concluded that there was not the slightest indication that nuclear energy would ever be obtainable. A decade and change later, Tom Watson, the chief of IBM, surveyed the potential world market for computers, pondered, and concluded that there was a demand “for about five.”

<sup>254</sup> Shemer’s Last Law by Michael Shemer in *The Scientific American*, 2002

*Percentage of Homes with Electricity*

1901: 2%  
1997: 99%

*Average Income per Household*

1901: \$419 (\$8,360 – inflation adjusted)  
1999: \$40,816

*Share of Income Spent on Food*<sup>255</sup>

1901: 43%  
1997: 15%

Flush toilets, refrigerators, central heating and electricity – nonexistent or rare at the turn of the last century – are now commonplace. Adjusting for inflation, middle-income households make more than twice what they did in 1929.

These are indeed important gains and the world is a better place because of them. It is not just that we have been making progress. Something about the way American society operates has allowed it to nurture this kind of better world.<sup>256</sup> It could also be argued that, in some respects, modern Western society represents a much more moral place than ever existed in the world before. This is a world where all have rights, where freedoms are respected, where all can vote for their rulers and where the rule of law is supreme. And indeed, it is hard to imagine any previous society, even under the Greeks,<sup>257</sup> that came close.

However, it would seem that most, if not all, of these achievements are in the area of means rather than ends. The average person is looking to be more comfortable physically, to have freedom to express himself, to have electricity and flowing water so that he can use these things to live the good life or at least a better life. But he certainly does not regard these things as the goal of life itself. What that goal is may differ from person to person, but a

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<sup>255</sup> Roger Simon and Angie Cannon, U.S. News & World Report, August 6, 2001

<sup>256</sup> Harold Evans writes in his article The Power of Freedom in the Dec. 27, 1999 issue of U.S. News and World Report:

“... The Soviet Union had all the resources of the North American continent, and so do China, Brazil and India [but they did not achieve as much].

Something else was present in the American experiment, and it is still there ... Uncle Sam’s ... approaches the future and boldness, believing the impossible can be rendered possible with time and diligence. “This is an epoch of invention and progress unique in the history of the world ... a gigantic tidal wave of human ingenuity and resource, so stupendous in its magnitude, so complex in its diversity, so profound in its thought, so fruitful in its wealth, so beneficial in its results, that the mind is strained and embarrassed in an effort to expand to a full appreciation of it.” Those effusive words ... appeared in a Scientific American editorial in 1896. They are equally true today.

... Each of us now has more technological power than all the czars put together. Thirty years ago computers were huge mainframes fussed over by scientists in dust-free institutions. I needed special permission to visit the ACE machine at Britain’s National Physical Laboratory. Today there is more capacity in my digital watch.

... When Henry Luce wrote an essay on “The American Century” in 1941 ...

... America is so varied and full of contradictions that it is always possible to find material for an obituary. It is moving so fast it will “break its damn neck”; it has so many races that it will break up into disgruntled factions competing for diminishing natural resources; it is letting in so many immigrants who don’t speak English that they will “serve the purposes of corruption and altogether retard the development of an American consciousness”; it is altogether bound to be “the most tremendous failure.”

All these confident predictions were made by distinguished Americans and observant visitors – Henry Adams, Rudyard Kipling, H. G. Wells, Walt Whitman – at the beginning of the 20th century. America confounded the Cassandras, and my bet is that it will do so again in the next hundred years. I have seen the future and it works.”

<sup>257</sup> You were all right if you were a citizen in ancient Athens. But woe betide if you happened to be a slave or a woman or a non-citizen. In fact only a minority of the inhabitants of Athens were officially citizens.

cumulative list includes things such as happiness, ethical living, spirituality, meaning in life, peace on earth, etc. When we look at these things we see that not only has society not improved, but in many respects it has gone backwards.<sup>258</sup>

We would like to argue even more strongly, that this same society seems to suffer from certain contradictions, which seem to ensure that it will ultimately collapse on itself, or be succeeded by something better. This we call the Messianic Era.

For example, normal children aged 9-17 exhibit a higher level of anxiety today than children who were treated for psychiatric disorders 50 years ago.<sup>259</sup> Stress is triggered by increasing physical isolation – brought on by high divorce rates and less involvement in community,<sup>260</sup> among other things – and a growing perception that the world is a more dangerous place. Suicide rates are up from a century ago.<sup>261</sup> While it is true that the late nineties brought a reduction in violent crime for several years in a row, and that other moral indices also improved, these improvements were minor corrections. The false optimism which any improvement produces<sup>262</sup> hides an obvious fact – that the overall trend is downwards. The number of homicides per 100,000 people in 1900 was 1.2. In 1999, it was 5.8. Crime rates may have, in some respects, again achieved some of the ‘lows’ of the sixties (although, in the main, they did not drop below 1985 rates), but this was still higher than the fifties. Teenage violence and sex did not even correct back to the rates at the beginning of the decade.<sup>263</sup> The overall trend is for these figure to rise and rise.<sup>264</sup> The use of foul language on TV, divorce and the lack of family,<sup>265</sup> rudeness and lack of civility,<sup>266</sup> the increasing stress on materialism

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<sup>258</sup> NY Times, Jan 04: ...As Gregg Easterbrook writes in "The Progress Paradox," the typical American is much better off today than a half-century ago, but is typically discontented. How happy are humans entitled to be, anyway? Imagine, given the debate over government regulation in general and the controversy decades ago about fluoride, if some public official suggested placing Prozac in the water supply. We will never completely resolve the paradoxes of progress by altering our genes or controlling their effects. As the pressure to do so mounts, it may be worth recalling an older paradox: Paradise was not enough to satisfy Adam and Eve."

<sup>259</sup> Jean Twenge of Case Western Reserve University writing in the American Psychological Association's *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2000

<sup>260</sup> Some of our measures of progress, like televisions and sprawling suburbs, are actually making it harder for people to form the communities they need to feel happy.

<sup>261</sup> Americans also drink more and smoke more cigarettes than they did in 1900. Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam, author of *Bowling Alone*, argues that many Americans are feeling what he calls "civic malaise." He cites recent surveys that show most people believe social and moral values are worse now than when they were growing up, that the average American is less trustworthy, and that the breakdown of community is a serious problem.

<sup>262</sup> David Gergen, in U.S. News & World Report, December 6, 1999 wrote: Signs of cultural renewal should lift our sights. ... Progress is possible. We still control our own destiny. One of our greatest strengths as a society is our resiliency – our capacity to snap back from bad times. Just in time, it seems, we're recovering our bearings.

<sup>263</sup> In 1999, teenage pregnancy had dropped for 7 years in a row, but was still above 1992 rates and teen drug use was also slightly down, but still higher than the beginning of the decade.

<sup>264</sup> In 1999 for example, one columnist reported with pride: "The national crime rate has declined seven years in a row, and latest numbers are the lowest since 1985. Violent crime has followed a similar downward slope, dropping more than 6 percent in 1998. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that gun deaths dropped 21 percent between 1993 and 1997, while firearm-related injuries are down 41 percent." The author did not realize the irony of saying that crime rates were the lowest since 1985, meaning that they were well above anything that had ever come before that time.

<sup>265</sup> Here too, there was a slight correction. The divorce rate for married women is dropped to 1974 rates. Abortion, which steadily increased from 1983 through 1990, began declining in the 1990's. But all of this was much worse than had existed in the early 70's and further back.

<sup>266</sup> In his 1999 *Index of Leading Cultural Indicators*, William Bennett warned, "The nation we live in today is more violent and vulgar, coarse and cynical, rude and remorseless, deviant and depressed, than the one we once inhabited."

and the focus on self-gain rather than giving and self-sacrifice, are internal contradictions, which no society can maintain in the long run.<sup>267</sup>

More than that, despite periodic swings towards religion, it became more difficult to achieve anything spiritual. As one poet put it so well:

*The paradox of our time in history is that ...*

We have taller buildings	but shorter tempers
Wider freeways	but narrower viewpoints
We spend more	but we have less
We buy more	but enjoy it less
We have bigger houses	and smaller families
More conveniences	but less time
More degrees	but less sense
More knowledge	but less judgement
More experts	but more problems
More medicine	but less well-being
We have multiplied our possessions	but reduced our values
We talk too much	but listen too little
We've learned how to make a big living	but not a life
We've added years to life	not life to years
We've been all the way to the moon	but have trouble crossing the street to meet the new neighbor
We've conquered outer space	but not inner space
We've cleaned up the air	but polluted the soul
We've split the atom	but not our prejudices
We have higher incomes	but lower morals
These are the days of two incomes	but more divorce
Of fancier houses	but broken homes
There is much in the showroom	and little in the stockroom
We've become long on quantity	but short on quality <sup>268</sup>

### **Did the rest of the world improve?**

On the one hand, there were improvements in the Western World during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. One of the greatest achievements was the spread of the idea of human rights for everyone. 1999 marked the start of a “new era” for human rights after the international community deployed troops to stop atrocities,<sup>269</sup> arrested a former dictator accused of past abuses, and indicted a sitting head of state on ethnic cleansing charges. Today, government leaders who

<sup>267</sup> In 1994, William J. Bennett issued the first *Index of Leading Cultural Indicators*, one of his many contributions to the common weal. In his report, he provided a boxcar of graphs and charts substantiating his main conclusion. “In many ways, the condition of America is not good,” he wrote. “Over the past three decades we have experienced substantial social regression ... Unless these exploding social pathologies are reversed, they will lead to the decline and perhaps even to the fall of the American republic.”

<sup>268</sup> As published by Istochnik on their [www.istok.ru](http://www.istok.ru) Website, ©Casper Centre – The South African Board of Jewish Education, From the Fact Sheet “Shabbat”, Sept. 1999

<sup>269</sup> The most dramatic development was the deployment of troops by the international community to stop crimes against humanity in East Timor and Kosovo.

committed crimes against humanity “face a greater chance of prosecution and even military intervention.”

Human Rights Watch said “significant progress” was made toward an international system of justice,<sup>270</sup> citing the case against former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, which was moving through British courts,<sup>271</sup> and the indictment of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic.<sup>272</sup> The organization cited “an evolution in public morality” as a key factor behind progress made on the human rights front.

“More than at any time in recent history, the people of the world today are unwilling to tolerate severe human rights abuses and are insistent that something be done to stop them,” it said. And capitalism and democracy certainly made a lot of progress in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>273</sup>

Indeed it would seem that the brimming optimism, with which the 20<sup>th</sup> Century opened, was quite justified. A *New York Times* editorial on December 31, 1899, hailed the 19<sup>th</sup> century for its economic and scientific advances and predicted that the 20<sup>th</sup> would be even better. The next day, January 1, 1900, a *Times* headline proclaimed “The United States – the Envy of the World.” But, just ahead the world was to be plunged into the bloodiest conflicts of all human history. For a century as a whole, warfare is thought to have taken the lives of three times as many people as were killed in 19 previous centuries combined. Over 40 million were killed in each one of the World Wars, directly or through starvation. Stalin killed over 30 million (more than Hitler). An even higher number has been killed in wars since the Second World War.<sup>274</sup>

Even at the end of the century, military interventions were selective. The international community intervened in the former Yugoslavian countries<sup>275</sup> (though this did not prevent hundreds of thousands from dying<sup>276</sup>) and tried to help in Somalia and, in 1994, in Haiti, but ignored abuses in Angola, Colombia, Chechnya or Sudan.<sup>277</sup> These seemed to end a long line

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<sup>270</sup> In April, 2000, the NY Times also reported that the International court in the Netherlands set up to deal with crimes against humanity committed in the former Yugoslavian republics, was showing increasing successes. The Western countries were becoming more aggressive about capturing the criminals (at that time there were 39 in custody) and the court was breaking new ground in terms of the range of crimes that were being prosecuted, including Serbians charged with raping Moslem women.

<sup>271</sup> Pinochet was arrested in London in October 1998 at the request of a Spanish judge who wanted to try him on charges of torture allegedly committed during his 1973-90 rule in Chile. Originally, a British magistrate said he could be extradited, although this was eventually reversed because Pinochet was considered too ill to stand trial.

<sup>272</sup> This was the first indictment against a sitting head of state by The International Criminal Tribunal. As of writing this, in 2002, Milosevic’s trial was still in progress.

<sup>273</sup> Certainly, if Democracy and Capitalism are considered benchmarks, then things have gone forward. When the Berlin Wall fell at the end of the 80s, 69 countries were democratic; by 2000 the number had grown to 120. As for Capitalism, on the rim of China, 200 million people have lifted themselves out of poverty in recent years, the biggest advance in human history. This was a function of increasing open markets. From Buenos Aires to Beijing, people are embracing free enterprise.

<sup>274</sup> In *U.S. News and World Report*, January 3-10, 2000, *Roaring into 2000*, by David Gergen, p. 96

<sup>275</sup> In 1989, NATO’s Operation Allied Force was launched to counter Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic’s mistreatment of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. But the first air strikes ignited an orgy of Serbian retribution that sent more than 750,000 Kosovars into overflowing refugee camps. The U.S.-led campaign rained down some 23,000 bombs and missiles, eventually forcing Milosevic to withdraw – but not before he was indicted by an international war crimes tribunal. When Kosovars streamed home, many found their homes burned to the ground. In a bitter Balkan cycle, many turned to revenge, terrorizing Serbs who remained. (In *U.S. News and World Report*, January 3-10, 2000)

<sup>276</sup> Serb paramilitaries backed by Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic are accused of war crimes violations during the 3½-year war in Bosnia, the worst carnage in Europe since World War II. Some 200,000 Bosnians died or went missing and an estimated 20,000 women were raped during the conflict, which formally ended with the 1995 Dayton peace accords. The widespread and organized rapes were intended to humiliate the women and their families and to terrorize Muslims into flight as part of a Serb “ethnic cleansing” campaign.

<sup>277</sup> Ed Vulliamy, who reported the war in Bosnia, wrote:

of what was termed the Century of War. “This was the century of Passchendaele, Dresden, Nanking, Nagasaki and Rwanda; of the Final Solution, the gulag, the Great Leap Forward, Year Zero and ethnic cleansing – names that stand for killings in the six and seven figures and for suffering beyond comprehension.”<sup>278</sup>

While the Russians pounded Chechnya,<sup>279</sup> a reign of terror by paramilitary groups in East Timor (Indonesia) left thousands dead and displaced.<sup>280</sup> Worst of all was Rwanda. In 1994,<sup>281</sup> in 100 days, 800,000 people were killed. The daily killing rate exceeded that of the Nazi Holocaust, and the deed was mostly done, not by trained cadres, but by neighbors, co-workers, even family members.<sup>282</sup> The U.S.A., all Western countries, the United Nations – all stood by and watched.<sup>283</sup>

This horror came to compete with Cambodia in the 1970’s, when the Communist ruling Khmer Rouge had killed one and a half million of its own brethren.<sup>284</sup> Here too, there was never any international tribunal.<sup>285</sup>

Just next door to Rwanda, and also in the 1990’s, in the hills of Burundi, six years of ethnic conflict between the country’s Tutsi-dominated army and Hutu rebel groups claimed 150,000 lives and displaced millions of people.

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Most of us thought we could make a difference, at first. It seemed incredible that the world could watch, read and hear about what was happening to the victim people of this war, and yet do nothing – and worse. As it turned out, we went unheeded by the diplomats and on occasions were even cursed by the political leaders.

The victims and those close to them also note the response. Selma Hecimovic looked after Bosnian women who had been raped:

At the end, I get a bit tired of constantly having to prove. We had to prove genocide, we had to prove that our women are being raped, that our children have been killed. Every time I take a statement from these women, and you journalists want to interview them, I imagine those people, disinterested, sitting in a nice house with a hamburger and beer, switching channels on TV. I really don’t know what else has to happen here, what further suffering the Muslims have to undergo ... to make the so-called civilized world react.”

<sup>278</sup> Steven Pinler, see the full quote in the next footnote.

<sup>279</sup> Russian artillery and aircraft pounded rebel positions in the separatist republic – but also the homes of ordinary people, who proceeded to flee the scene in the hundreds of thousands. Moscow’s actions triggered international indignation, but no-one was inclined to do anything concrete to stop the slaughter.

<sup>280</sup> Military-backed militia gangs went on a violent rampage in East Timor following the announcement of the territory’s overwhelming vote for independence from Indonesia in a 1999 plebiscite. Hundreds of thousands of people were forced to flee their homes. The violence continued until international peacekeepers arrived on September 20. The militias left the area in ruins and almost its entire population uprooted.

<sup>281</sup> The government of Rwanda called on everyone in the Hutu majority of the country to murder everyone in the Tutsi minority.

<sup>282</sup> In the years since, Philip Gourevitch, a New Yorker writer, has talked to survivors, witnesses and participants to discover the origins and personal motives for this collective crime. His grim book indicates there were warnings. Those given to international agencies, especially the United Nations, make dismal reading.

<sup>283</sup> Time, Dec. 12 1999:

[In 1998] President Clinton apologized to Rwanda for the West’s failure to act in 1994 when faced with overwhelming evidence that genocide was under way in the central African country. But a U.N.-commissioned report states that the United Nations chose to ignore reports of the impending bloodbath, and its inaction was due in no small part to the desire of Washington and its allies to turn a blind eye.

“While it was very clear that action was needed, Washington played a major role in influencing the decision to take no action,” says TIME U.N. correspondent William Dowell. “Having just come out of the Somalia debacle, which had been badly managed by both the U.S. and the U.N., Washington didn’t want to get involved in another complex conflict in Africa.”

<sup>284</sup> The United Nations had established a form of trusteeship in the early 1990s and then handed the country over to civilian rule.

<sup>285</sup> Pol Pot, the movement’s principal leader, had died in 1998, but other leaders had been given amnesties by the Cambodian government. To add insult to injury one group of senior Khmer Rouge who had returned from their border redoubts had just been treated by the government to a tourist trip around the country.

“There are more children caught in conflict, in war around the world, than at any time,” UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy declared on December 12, 1999. “Indeed, victims of war today are largely civilian, largely women and children.”

There were those who claimed that the authority of moral law had broken down altogether, and was now something one obeyed by choice.<sup>286</sup>

Angola has been torn by civil war for almost a quarter of a century. All-out war began again in December 1998.<sup>287</sup> In the 1990’s no less than fourteen countries fought a war in the Congo.<sup>288</sup> The Sudan had had its civil war and was a disaster zone, with hundreds of

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<sup>286</sup> Adapted from a review by Steven Pinler of “Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century” by Jonathan Glover (Yale University Press) (in the NY Times Nov. 2000) as well as integrated quotes from the book:

“In Europe at the start of the twentieth century most people accepted the authority of morality. They thought there was a moral law, which was self-evidently to be obeyed. Emmanuel Kant had written of the two things which fill the mind with admiration and awe, ‘the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.’ In Cambridge in 1895, a century after Kant, Lord Acton still had no doubts: ‘Opinions alter, manners change, creeds rise and fall, but the moral law is written on the tablets of eternity.’ At the start of the twentieth century, reflective Europeans were also able to believe in moral progress, and to see human viciousness and barbarism in retreat. At the end of the century, it is hard to be confident either about the moral law or about moral progress.”

“Two things have led to the collapse of moral authority: The collapse of the authority of religion and decline in belief in God and the destruction of the belief, in the moral progress of mankind. The mutual slaughter of the First World War, the terror-famine of the Ukraine, the Gulag, Auschwitz, Dresden, the Burma Railway, Hiroshima, Vietnam, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Cambodia, Rwanda, the collapse of Yugoslavia, all contributed to this.”

“At the start of the century there was optimism, coming from the Enlightenment, that the spread of a humane and scientific outlook would lead to the fading away, not only of war, but also of other forms of cruelty and barbarism. Now we tend to see the Enlightenment view of human psychology as thin and mechanical, and Enlightenment hopes of social progress through the spread of humanitarianism and the scientific outlook as naïve.”

To talk as if barbarism is unique to the twentieth century is a myth: the whole of human history includes wars, massacres, and every kind of torture and cruelty: there are grounds for thinking that over much of the world the changes of the last hundred years or so have been towards a psychological climate more humane than at any previous time. But the barbarism of the past 100 years was still “a very unpleasant surprise.” This was the century of Passchendaele, Dresden, Nanking, Nagasaki and Rwanda; of the Final Solution, the gulag, the Great Leap Forward, Year Zero and ethnic cleansing – names that stand for killings in the six and seven figures and for suffering beyond comprehension. The technological progress that inspired the optimism of the Victorians turned out also to multiply the effects of old-fashioned evil and criminal stupidity.

The following vignette, though lacking the death and gore of the others, encapsulates for me how the century’s political movements could obliterate all that we value in life:

“A French ethnologist captured by the Khmer Rouge ... befriended a girl of about 3 whose father was marched away to probable death. He played with her and grew fond of her, but she was forced to attend indoctrination classes. Her smiling response to him was replaced by sullenness. One evening, looking him in the face, she tried to insert her finger between his ankle and the rope that bound him. Finding that she could, she called the guard to tighten the ropes.”

“Technology has made a difference. The decisions of a few people can mean horror and death for hundreds of thousands, even millions, of other people.”

These events shock us not only by their scale. They also contrast with the expectations, at least in Europe, with which the twentieth century began. One hundred years of largely unbroken European peace between the defeat of Napoleon and the First World War made it plausible to think that the human race was growing out of its warlike past. In 1915 the poet Charles Sorley, writing home a few months before being killed in battle, found it natural to say, ‘After all, war in this century is inexcusable: and all parties engaged in it must take an equal share in the blame of its occurrence.’

The bloody massacre in Bangladesh quickly covered the memory of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, the assassination of Allende drowned out the groans of Bangladesh, the war in the Sinai desert made people forget Allende, the Cambodian massacre made people forget Sinai, and so on and so forth until ultimately everyone lets everything be forgotten.

<sup>287</sup> The return to war marked the end of the difficult, incomplete peace process that had begun with the Lusaka Protocol of November 1994. The government has been fighting against the rebel UNITA forces led by Jonas Savimbi.

<sup>288</sup> This conflict was sometimes called Africa’s Great War. President Laurent Kabila was aided by Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia and Chad. The rebels were supported by Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia, Burundi, Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Republic of Congo and others. Nobody knows the toll; the estimate most often cited is 100,000 combatants, refugees and civilians killed since fighting in Congo began. Amnesty International, Human Rights

thousands without food. Then there was the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, where tens of thousands died, untelevised and unremarked upon by the world. Possibly the most horrible African war of the 90's was that in Sierra Leone.<sup>289</sup> The rebels' trademark was to chop off the hands of peasants in the countryside. "Short sleeves or long?" the rebels would ask the peasants, and then hack at the elbow or wrist accordingly. Tens of thousands had been mutilated in this way. Over 400,000 people had fled into neighboring countries to escape. Whereas two thousand people died in Kosovo in over a year, when the West did intervene, over two thousand people had been murdered by the rebels in Freetown in just a couple of months. But here the West did nothing.

In Africa, fighting burns in an unbroken line from the South Atlantic to the Red Sea: Angola, Namibia, Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea (not to mention a military coup in the Ivory Coast, a West African nation that was once the model of stability).

Perhaps the worst is Sudan. The civil war in southern Sudan has claimed two million Sudanese over the last 18 years and, as of March 2002, was still going on.<sup>290</sup>

Oh, and lets not forget other wars elsewhere, in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Sri Lanka and a host of other places.

Nor did it take war to create misery. Pakistan and Afghanistan, under the Taliban, allowed violence against women to become a "pervasive" problem in the region. In Iraq there were frequent reports of "mass summary executions" of prisoners. In Africa, the spread of AIDS was killing more children than bullets or bombs. UNICEF, the international aid agency, said the number of people living in poverty grew to more than 1.2 billion – half of them children. Another 250 million children are forced to go to work. Economic upheaval in many Asian countries forced those nations to cut social spending, and many children had to drop out of schools.

And what of America's response to all of this? Laura Secor<sup>291</sup> describes how Samantha Power, in "*A Problem From Hell*," documents American passivity in the face of genocides around the world. In Washington warnings pass up the chain and disappear. Intelligence is gathered and then ignored or denied. The will of the executive remains steadfastly opposed to intervention; its guiding assumption is that the cost of stopping genocide is great, while the

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Watch and other groups have documented scores of cases of civilians being killed by combatants, for food or money, or because they were merely in the way.

Despite its fabulous potential wealth, Congo itself was nearly bled dry by the time this latest war broke out. Three decades of pillage by Mobutu Sese Seko, the dictator who was propped up by the country's riches and the cold war patronage of the United States, had ravaged the land that Mr. Mobutu had renamed Zaire.

But nearly three years after Mr. Mobutu was overthrown by Mr. Kabila – with widespread hopes among locals, Congo's neighbors and more distant foreign powers – life here remains surreally broken down. In Kinshasa, one in 10 children and mothers are malnourished. Rituals as basic as family meals have broken down, as the prices of certain staples like yams have tripled since November.

Hundreds of thousands have been uprooted from their homes. Economies, already as diseased and undernourished as their people, are dying in what was the naturally richest country in Africa.

<sup>289</sup> In 1996, after decades of corrupt military dictatorship, elections had been held and a civilian government created under a former U.N. official, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. In 1997 he was overthrown by the rebels and then restored to power by a West African peacekeeping force led by Nigeria, which had been unsuccessfully trying to defeat the rebels ever since. In recent weeks the country had imploded as political and moral order collapsed.

<sup>290</sup> The war, arising from the rebellion by the southern part of the country (mostly Christian or animist and black African) against smothering rule by the Muslim, Arab northern part, has also left 4.5 million homeless. Both the rebels and the government appear to have been monsters. Despite the endless carnage, there is a ray of hope. The government of Sudan is stepping away from its terrorist past, and both the government and the rebels seem exhausted by a civil war that neither can win. A partial cease-fire has been achieved. But for the time being, the war goes on.

<sup>291</sup> NY Times, April 14, 2002

political cost of ignoring it is next to nil. President Bush the elder comes off as a stone-hearted prisoner to business interests, President Clinton as an amoral narcissist.

The United States declines to intervene militarily in genocidal conflicts, but it also frequently declines to do anything – even to rebuke perpetrators publicly. Turkey’s Armenian genocide, the Khmer Rouge’s systematic murder of more than a million Cambodians, the Iraqi regime’s gassing of its Kurdish population, the Bosnian Serbian Army’s butchery of unarmed Muslims and the Rwandan Hutu militias’ slaughter of some 800,000 Tutsi. Serbian war crimes in Kosovo were quickly deemed genocidal, whereas in the more obvious case of Bosnia, State Department officials carefully picked their way around the g-word (genocide). (Power has room, in this substantial volume, for only passing mention of the massacres of similar and larger scale in Nigeria, Bangladesh, Burundi and East Timor, among other places.) Time and again, Power recounts, although the United States had the knowledge and the means to stop genocide abroad, it has not acted. Worse, it has made a resolute commitment to not acting. Washington’s record, Power ruefully observes, is not one of failure, but of success.

Self-interest trumps humanitarian concern in United States foreign policy with striking consistency, Power demonstrates. Cold-war calculations led the Nixon and Carter administrations first to pave the way for the Khmer Rouge’s ascent to power, and then to continue to justify its right to rule Cambodia long after a Vietnamese invasion dislodged Pol Pot. Business interests and the desire to contain Iran’s revolution induced the first Bush administration to support Saddam Hussein economically as he gassed and bulldozed Kurdish villages. Of Bosnia, former President Bush’s secretary of state, James Baker, famously proclaimed, “We don’t have a dog in that fight.” Rwanda, the subject of Power’s most shattering chapter, lay even farther from any vital interest of the United States. There, the Clinton administration ignored early warnings of impending catastrophe, declined to intervene and, according to many, opposed United Nations peacekeeping efforts. When at last the Clinton White House was stirred to action in Kosovo, it was, Power writes, largely out of concern for NATO’s credibility and the administration’s own domestic image. “I’m getting creamed,” she quotes President Clinton as saying when the lobby of opinion makers calling for intervention in Bosnia had grown deafening. It would be too humiliating to go through that again.<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> Not all American politicians have been so cynical. Henry Morgenthau, Charles Twining, Claiborne Pell, Madeleine Albright, Robert Dole and others have certainly shown more of a moral sense. A group of junior State Department officials resigned to protest American inaction in Bosnia. Peter Galbraith, when he was a staff member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, fought fruitlessly for recognition and condemnation of the Iraqi Kurdish genocide, traveling at great personal risk to northern Iraq.

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